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Thinkbit

A morning prayer: "Lord, keep me from being like the porridge I get in this place — always lukewarm and difficult to stir."

Source: unknown

Fundamentalists Anonymous helps religion 'addicts'

Marian Van Til

OTTAWA — Is it possible to be addicted to religion — or more specifically, fundamentalist Christianity? An increasing number of people think so, because they have either experienced the addiction themselves or have lived with other "addicts."

That's where a group called Fundamentalists Anonymous (FA) comes in. Like Alcoholics Anonymous, Gamblers Anonymous and similar groups aimed at specific addictions, FA uses a 12-point system to wean those addicted to TV preachers and various forms of fundamentalist Christianity back to mental, spiritual and social health.

Fundamentalism has been gaining in popularity. Dr. George Vander Velde, senior member in systematic theology at Toronto's Institute for Christian Studies believes that's because "there's a general search for security. It's a retrenchment in the face of a rapidly changing world."

Vander Velde notes that fundamentalism began as a "protest against liberalism," a mostly legitimate reaction against "an undermining of the gospel." But fundamentalism went wrong, he says, when it began "singling out certain aspects of the gospel and placing them all on the same footing so that you can no longer talk about the 'heart of the gospel.' Today fundamentalism is reiterating past stances without creatively testing the spirits."

Looking for absolute answers

He admits that in the "addicted" persons with whom FA works, there are other factors at work as well. There are psychological facets to the problem, often involving the "hanging on to a charismatic leader," notes Vander Velde.

Bill Gilbert of Ottawa's Anglican archdiocese thinks there are "pockets of fundamentalism in all churches," and Rev. Joe Muldoon agrees. Muldoon is a priest at the St. Maurice Catholic parish on the outskirts of Ottawa. He says from his experience with counselling ever greater numbers of people who have been "overwhelmed by religion," that people often become absorbed in fundamentalism at crisis points in their lives. Like Vander Velde, he believes they are looking for "certainty or absolute answers."

Television and major magazines and newspapers across North America, including the *Ottawa Citizen* and the *Edmonton Journal* are paying some attention to this trend.

"FA isn't anti-Christian or anti-God," says Jim Luce, quoted by Marsha Skuce of the *Ottawa Citizen*. Luce is an ex-bond portfolio manager in New York and one of FA's founders. "This isn't about theology at all. It's about an authoritarian mindset."

Luce and FA's other founder, Wall Street lawyer and one time fundamentalist Richard Yao, describe themselves as having remained *committed* but not *addicted* Christians. FA maintains the headquarters for their four-year-old organization in a Manhattan church basement, exact address unknown due to bomb threats they have received. Yao has even been attacked and threatened at knifepoint.

FA moved into Canada through the addiction experience — and later, the dedication — of an Ottawa woman known simply as Judy. Judy's husband, an RCMP officer, was converted eight years ago, but what he was "converted" to did not much resemble biblical Christianity.

He beat her

He radically changed all right, Judy relates. The good news was he stopped smoking and drinking. But the rest was bad news. He stopped using medication of any kind (including aspirin) — he tried the laying on of hands — and prohibited music, movies and the use of makeup by Judy and their daughters. He went into debt to write cheques to Jimmy Swaggart and re-arranged his work schedule so he could watch Swaggart's program and others. He kept pressing Judy to accept his beliefs and way of life, and beat her for her refusal.

Judy became increasingly alarmed and sought help from every source she knew: family, friends, Catholic priests.

See **ORGANIZATION** — p. 2

Hamilton Christian High School celebrates new facility

Photo credits: H.D.C.H. and Bert Witvoet

For story, see p. 6

In this issue:

Ed Vanderkloet visited "The Emerald Sash" . . . . . p. 10
Adrian Peetoom concludes his series "Why not all my children go to church anymore" . . . . . p. 11
VISION TV revamps its programming, and other television news . . . . . pp. 13, 14

Organization fights authoritarian mindset

... continued from page 1.

She even tried talking to her husband's supervisors at work.

As the situation became more and more critical, Judy spent less time at home. She was finally divorced and bought out her husband's share of their home to protect herself and their children.

"Sometimes it was like a madhouse," she recalls. "I thought *I* was going mad. I never knew what to expect. I'd walk into the kitchen and find him crying — just crying with the joy of being saved."

Avoid controlling, being controlled

Ironically, Judy found her way out via television: she heard about Fundamentalists Anonymous on the Phil Donahue show.

When Judy called FA about her husband she was told she must concentrate on herself. The group's recovery plan can be summarized by the adage "Take responsibility for your own life."

Judy did that and eventually FA began referring its Canadian callers to her. (As a precaution, Judy's full name is only given to serious callers after screening by FA in New York.) In the past year as a "networker" for FA, she has offered support and advice to two or three callers a month from all parts of Canada; she now knows that her situation is far from unique.

Though fundamentalist Christianity originated as an American phenomenon, Jim Luce says that there is little difference in profile between Canadian and American callers; this addiction is no respecter of persons or nationalities. All age groups and economic levels are involved, though there is a tendency for these addicts to be fairly well-educated.

Though viewing audiences and contribution levels are down, the scandals that have rocked Jim Bakker, Jimmy Swaggart and other televangelists in both the U.S. and Canada don't seem to have had much of a dampening effect on hardcore fundamentalist addicts, say those associated with FA.

Jim Luce thinks that because of such viewers, the big days of televangelism may not be over. "It's discredited in the liberal press," he notes, "but fundamentalists don't read it or don't believe it."

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BETWEEN THE LINES

Socio-political comment by Syd Hielema, Clarence Joldersma, Jake Kuiken, Jim Romahn

Loopholes and the spirit of the law

I was pleased to hear a farmer speak up during a meeting in October to note that a new government program is an open invitation to cheat.

He was referring to a new set of restrictions designed to limit municipal tax rebates to genuine farmers. Non-resident landlords would be cut out. So would hobby farmers and corporations who have handsome earnings and profits from their non-farming careers, investments and businesses.

The farmer was referring to ways people can get around those restrictions. For example, landlords can get around the rental restriction by switching over from cash rental agreements to share-cropping arrangements. Having agreed to take their rent in crops, such as corn or hay, the landlords can turn around and make an arrangement to have their tenants pay cash for those same crops. The government is shown one set of books that documents the share-cropping arrangement, but it need never know that there's another, hidden deal.

Another example: the province will pick up the municipal tax bill only on share-cropping arrangements that were signed before June 1. It would be difficult for government officials to distinguish between a contract genuinely signed before June 1 and one reached today, but post-dated to May.

A third example: the new regulations begin to reduce the tax rebate once off-farm income tops $40,000. The rebate is reduced on a sliding scale until, at $60,000 in off-farm income, the property owner qualifies for nothing. Provincial treasurer Robert Nixon said this is designed to cut off big corporations, such as Stelco, and rich city lawyers, such as Attorney-General Ian Scott.

The farmer in the audience said it's easy to get around that regulation by simply incorporating a separate company whose sole business is farming. It matters not what the shareholders earn or do, as long as the *corporation* is simply and only farming.

"There are loopholes big enough to drive a whole fleet of trucks through," said the farmer. "That doesn't do much to save the government money. What it does is make farmers devious." I agree.

But is it the government that makes farmers devious? I think not.

Progressive slide into greed

What has happened in our society is a progressive slide into greed. Why, for example, do so many individuals and companies pay so much to accountants, tax consultants and lawyers to deal with their income tax? Do they have difficulty understanding and obeying the spirit of the law, or are they seeking loopholes in the letter of the law?

Or consider unemployment insurance. Should working women who become pregnant and decide to raise a family claim benefits when they have no real intention of returning to the work force? Some say the letter provides abundant opportunities to pocket those benefits. And everybody else is doing it, so why not us? Others consider the spirit of unemployment insurance and pass up the opportunity because they are not really seeking employment.

In a similar fashion, investors are advised and encouraged to consider every angle to realize the maximum return. We're told that wise consumers delay the payment of bills until the very last day so they can earn the maximum amount in their daily interest bank accounts. Should we invest in 90-day treasury bills, the trust company's one-year GICs or Canada Savings Bonds? Should we jump in or out of the stock market?

What's lost here is any sense of the people whose lives are affected by our drive to wring the last tenth of a decimal point out of every dollar. Is it stewardship to be clever in dealing with our dollars?

What spirit drives *us*?

I don't want to prescribe hard and fast answers. I just want you to consider some questions — and to remember that there's a biblical basis for this type of questioning.

Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, read out the letter of the law. And then he drove home the spirit of those laws. Adultery? Not the letter of the law, as interpreted to fine detail by the leading theological consultants of the day, but the spirit of the law, as in underlying lustful thoughts. Murder? No, not the letter of the law, but the spirit that underlies the act, the spirit of hating your brother or sister.

The spirit that drives the world is all around us. That farmer recognized it in the devious response to Ontario's new municipal tax rebates. We all should be able to recognize it in the way we respond to our personal environments.

It might help to think of these examples when we pray for the Holy Spirit, God's perfect Spirit, to come into our lives, to fill us. And in that filling, leave no space for worldly spirits.

Some people think that farmers, being close to nature, have an easier time of it in their struggle between good and evil, between the Christian and the secular. Think again.

Jim Romahn is farm editor of the Kitchener-Waterloo Record *and lives in Kitchener, Ont.*

Pressreview

Carl D. Tuyl

As spectators in the circus will hold their breath when the girl on the trapeze is in full flight, so the Commonwealth community was in the grip of fearful suspense when, eyes ablaze, chins set at ready-to-fire angle, Monsieur and Margaret went at each other. And an awesome sight it was. No more cozy tea at 10 Downing Street for Monsieur, and no more 21-gun salute in Ottawa for Margaret. They were seated close to each other but their usual mutual respect was replaced by a coldness that could have frozen an average-sized elephant instantly.

★★★★

The whole sanctions discussion seems to be somewhat frivolous. Japan and West Germany are more than eager to trade with South Africa, and in spite of Monsieur's militant stance, Canadian businesspeople, including the striped-suited Bay Street gentlemen on the boards of our chartered banks, haven't shied away either from making a buck in Pretoria.

★★★★

Monsieur claims that economic sanctions have brought about a gentler and kinder South Africa. That is a very debatable point of view. I believe that a great deal of credit must go to the church. Professor Johan Heyns, moderator and spiritual leader of South Africa's Dutch Reformed Church (to which 80 per cent of government legislators belong) has said that there can be no political solution in South Africa unless the whites undergo a fundamental change of heart. In 1986 the church adopted a document known as "Church and Society" which declared apartheid a scriptural error and racism a sin.

★★★★

The Rev. Allan Boesak, moderator of the mixed race Dutch Reformed Mission Church, became the first person in this century to be confirmed for a second term as chairperson of WARC (World Alliance of Reformed Churches), which represents 57 million reformed people. Not the Christian Reformed people; it is too hard to represent them.

★★★★

Meech Lake has pushed the San Francisco earthquake from the front pages. There was a cacophony of criticism emanating from provincial capitals. New Brunswick's Premier Frank McKenna, surprisingly, sounded quite conciliatory. Contrary to my earlier predictions, and in spite of the Manitoba militia of Doer, Carstairs and Filmon, I see hope for Meech Lake. There might be a parallel agreement. Gazing in my computer screen (for lack of a crystal ball) I also see great political potential for Frank McKenna.

★★★★

A research poll has shown that hardly anybody knows any of the NDP leadership candidates. No wonder; except for Barret's boring baloney, there hasn't been much to report. The campaign is about as exciting as an exhibition of chewing gum wrappers. The Liberal hopefuls did not fare much better. The Chretien — Martin battle is being fought behind the closed doors of Liberal hangouts. The former chairperson of the Liberal party who for the first time called Chretien "Number one in our hearts," is now chairperson of Paul Martin's campaign. That woman's political faithfulness is as changeable as a cotton diaper.

★★★★

Auditor General Dye, a man who is not averse to being centre stage, let go with his annual auditory anger. The *Ottawa Citizen* was quick to pick up on his report with a headline fatter than a fast food hamburger: "MINISTERS HIDING TRAVEL EXPENSES." Mr. Dye himself admitted that "in terms of dollars, it's a nit." The *Ottawa Citizen* apparently has no fear of headlining "nits."

★★★★

Let not Margaret Thatcher's outburst in Kula Lampur lead you to the conclusion that the British do not know how to be polite. Consider their policies regarding the boatpeople in Hong Kong. No English gentleman or gentlewoman would speak about the forceable return of these people. They call it "involuntary repatriation." It is like the man who was not fired from his job, but was offered "an alternative career possibility."

★★★★

We should take note of the fact that the Episcopal bishops in the U.S. have agreed to disagree about the ordination of women as Episcopal priests and bishops. They stated: "We joyfully affirm ordained women in the ministries which they exercise" and then they noted that "within Anglicanism those who believe that women should not be ordained hold a recognized theological position." Now peace prevails as it should.

★★★★

The *Christian Science Monitor* reports that the U.S. expects South Korea to shoulder more of the burden of its own defense. Not a bad idea; after all, North America buys all those automobiles which they produce. The South Koreans are interested in the Canadian Candu nuclear generators. We haven't sold such a thing-a-ma-ding since the beginning of this decade. At more than $5 million they are not your regular five-and-dime item, of course.

★★★★

East Germany will start to issue passports to its citizens so that they can be free to travel to any destination of their liking. There goes the Wall! Will Germany be united? The Hungarian government proclaimed the country to be a free and democratic republic. The Soviets have 'fessed up that their Afghanistan invasion was an unjust war. People are putting powder instead of milk in their coffee. Monsieur and Margaret are at loggerheads. The Christian Reformed Church will reorganize itself.

Q & A with Peter and Marja can be found on page 15

★★★★

Where Jeremiah and Isaiah caught their visions, and hurled their homilies at the people, where centuries later Jesus Christ healed the sick, people now shoot at each other. Change and decay all around in large, family-sized heaps.

★★★★

Why did the cold fusion rage fizzle out? It has gone the way of the NDP leadership campaign: no news. Was it a flash in the pan? I was hoping that my hydro bill would go down.

★★★★

That typical, Big Apple highbrow publication the *New Yorker* picked the following from the *Montreal Mirror:* "Erratum: The listing for the band "The New Bibles" in the last issue's music directory should have read "The Nubiles.'" And the *Saturday Evening Post,* known for its down to earth journalistic stance, advises as follows: "Telling your boss what you really think can be called honesty, integrity and self-assertiveness. It can also be called instant unemployment."

★★★★

And like we are wont to, we leave you, gentle reader, with a thought-provoking question: Is it true that tradition is the dictatorship of the dead? Think about it; spend some sleepless nights weighing this question in your mind!

Carl Tuyl is pastor of First Christian Reformed Church, Kingston, Ont.

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Editorials

Liberalism will not save South Africa

It is not difficult to demonstrate that the 1980s have not been good for Africa as a whole. The average income has gone down, as has the literacy rate. There is less food and less health care available than in the '70s. More money is spent on paying off national debt and less is spent on education.

There are several factors that explain this unfortunate situation. Africa has been plagued by long periods of drought, the international economic environment has been hostile for developing nations, the price of the three main items of export — petrol, coffee and cocoa — has decreased. At the political level there has been much instability and corruption. And to make matters more difficult, there has been an increase in the overall population.

It's not difficult to see that this continent-wide trend has not been lost upon white South Africans, whose country provides a shining exception to the rule. There is a tendency to think that their country will fall into the same trap of poverty once blacks take over the reigns of power.

That is not altogether a fair conclusion, however. South Africa has been blessed with rich minerals, not the least of which are gold and diamond. The climate has been more benevolent there than it has been in tropical Africa. Since South Africa is a developed nation, the economic environment is not all that hostile, inspite of sanctions.

Yet, there is an element of truth to the reluctance in seeing a quick transition of power from white to black, especially if that means an upheaval in the economic structures of South Africa. There is no denying that being white has historically linked South Africa with the developed world. South Africa has a diversified economy because the white population has been a diversified society for some time. There is a strong middle class that supports a differentiated society. If this complex structure that took decades to build would suddenly be disrupted by blacks eager for power but lacking the education and sophistication to carry on the present level of development, the blacks themselves may rue their day of freedom.

It may be difficult for Westerners to understand, but moving into a full-fledged exercise of individual rights and freedoms may not be the best way for South Africa to go; at least, not yet. (Quebec is trying to make that same point as it seeks to protect its distinct society and culture over against a Manitoba protest that wants the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to p evail.) It's the heresy of liberalism that says that society is made up only of individuals. Christians have traditionally seen society as also being made up of groups and associations.

We must keep this in mind as we see present developments in South Africa unfold. Historically whites with Protestant values (I am including Zimbabwe) have been able to work something that has not been duplicated anywhere else on the continent of Africa. To the extent that this has been a good development, it should be safeguarded as much as possible so that the greatest number of blacks and whites may benefit in the future. **BW**

We need 20 daily renewals to see better

I was talking over the Bell wire with our Calgary columnist Jake Kuiken. Somehow the discussion turned to a general spiritual malaise we seem to sense around us. "Christians are losing their vision," he said, echoing a sentiment expressed by his fellow Albertan Harry Groenewold of The King's College (See "A vision lost?" C.C. April 14).

"It's been a while since a speaker has truly inspired me," I said, confirming with that statement that a cloud of dullness has also settled on Ontario. "What really turns me off is generalities at official occasions about faithfulness and blessings."

Jake said that he finds himself comparing our spiritual climate with that in Eastern Europe. He mentioned how the Orthodox Church in the Soviet Union, the Catholic Church in Poland, the Lutheran Church in East Germany, the Reformed Church in Hungary respond to challenges around them with a great sense of purpose. One would conclude that the church in Eastern Europe has vision.

I mentioned that in the West spiritual vitality requires a lot of self-discipline. It almost seems as if the church cannot remain vital without external oppression, as if Christians need conflict to stay alive. The saying "where there's a will ..." has given way to "where there's a whip, there's a way."

Some people are lucky. They get hit by real adversity — sickness, death of a loved one, break-down of marriage, handicap or unemployment. It either makes or breaks them. But when it makes them, look out: the juices of spiritual vitality begin to flow again and they have no difficulty falling on their knees and thanking God for who he is in the midst of all the pain and grief. At such a time, they also stop generalizing about blessings and faithfulness. They know darn well the specifics of their release and the agenda that awaits them. They give validity to the beatitude "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."

"The time of oppression will come to all," said my Calgarian brother. "The destruction of the environment will be so evident that we cannot ignore the challenge it places before us."

"But by that time the possibilities of turning things around will be very small," I added. "Too bad we don't have the spiritual insight to take drastic measures today."

He agreed. The vision is not there.

Ecological vision

Very few Christians will follow Canadian scientist David Suzuki's family's example of not taking the car for anything that is within 10 blocks of his house. You need vision for that — vision that produces self-discipline.

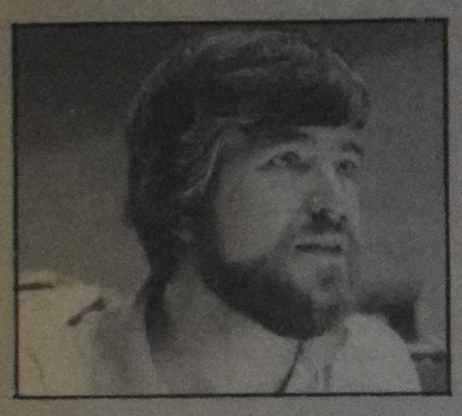
Most people will tell you that they *cannot* implement such a rule. They *have* to take the car. I have argued that way. But, more often than not, it's a lie. It's not that we *cannot*; rather, we *will not* implement such a rule. It's a matter of the will of a person, not of the limiting circumstances. One storm dumping a foot of snow on our roads will prove us wrong. One earthquake with a magnitude of 6.9 will tell us that "cannot" was a dishonest figment of our excuse-filled imagination.

You need to see things clearly in a society that practises delusion on a grand scale. You need 20/20 vision. In my own unorthodox way I have translated that 20/20 vision into 20 confessions of wrong and 20 adjustments to the sweet will of God for a more responsible way of living.

Our family has started on number one. We have confessed our too great dependence on the metal monster in our driveway and we walk, bus or bike to work whenever we "can." The road to hell is paved with good intentions, skeptics may say. But my friend Gerald Vandezande of Citizens for Public Justice tells me that, according to his wife, Winn, saints are sinners who keep on trying. Ah, there's hope for us yet.

BW

JUST A MOMENT/HERMAN PRAAMSMA



"May you never know the sweetness of a bitter tear, may you learn that a rainy day is never dull, and may you vision Nature as a sacramental of Beauty itself.

May you live long in health on the green side of the grave, and be welcomed in the Land of Otherwhere by Him whose arms are ever outstretched to little ones, and to those who are as such."
(Francis Carlin, 1881-1945, To an Unknown, Waiting for a Birthday)

It is very well possible that the government and courts of our country will decide in the near future that only that life which is *viable* outside the mother's womb will be allowed the protection of our laws.

What a sad business!

This summer I took a 12-week basic unit of training at the Sunnybrook Medical Center in Toronto. Sunnybrook has the largest trauma unit in Canada. That means that it receives numerous accident victims, many in very serious and critical condition. The emergency teams of doctors and nurses succeed in preserving life in many cases only through their tremendous skill and experience; but often their victory is a Pyrrhic one. Even though the mortality rate is incredibly low, the number of patients on life-support systems or totally dependent on continual care is very high. In other words, there are many, many patients at Sunnybrook who are not "viable" apart from their tubes, needles, nurses and machines.

I also have the pleasure of being involved (in some small ways) in a local nursing home in Woodbridge, Ont. In our Sunday services the vast majority of residents who attend do so in wheelchairs. Many of them are utterly dependent on nursing care, some confined to their beds most of the time. What sort of definition of viability would anyone care to apply to them?

Emotional burden

Let's be brutally honest: some of the people I've described are not *wanted* a whole lot. They form an emotional burden and a psychological strain on relatives and former friends, who would just as soon be rid of that burden and that strain, and who have, in many cases, stopped visiting altogether.

Caring for those who are dependent takes physical and emotional investment; it asks for compassion, empathy and love.

And those items seem to be in increasingly short supply in our society. Consider the unborn child: from the moment of conception God provides a most wonderful life support system, so delicate and intricate that it takes our breath away! Human life is nurtured and fed in the safest environment possible and grows towards wholeness and independence. And now we would have the same hospital which prides itself on its low mortality rate and fabulous life-support systems sever the life-lines of the unborn, because they are not *viable*? If that isn't massive hypocrisy (with apologies to Hypocrates), what is?

What precisely does it mean to be viable? Is there, in fact, *anyone* on this planet who is totally self-sufficient? Is there *any* person who can live without other people, for instance? At any stage? Think about it.

The bitter fact is that the unborn, just as dependent and interwoven with the rest of humanity *as we all are,* have no voice. And how long will it be before others who have no voice are treated with equal contempt, and viable life will in fact come to mean: those which are useful, those which we want, those which are able to contribute.

And that, I submit, is the radical antitheses of the gospel message. The Bible teaches us that if God takes away his upholding care — his divine support system! — this world would collapse like a house of cards. Creatures depend utterly on their creator, and it is their downfall precisely that they have forgotten that fact of life and have tried to play God.

It is the gospel that the Creator in love and goodness came and reached out to that which was no longer viable, and showed his compassion to lost sinners. And you read in the gospel that God in a special way cares for the widow, the fatherless and those who are poor and without voice. God's way is the way of grace, the way of Jesus Christ, and outside of him no human person is viable before God.

Herman Praamsma is associate pastor of Rehoboth Fellowship Christian Reformed Church of Toronto, and is currently an intern at the Ontario Correctional Institute, Brampton.

Longer Letter

Explaining the pro-life position

Thank you for your conscientious coverage of the vital issues that are confronting Christians in society today. As president of the Welland/Port Colborne (Ontario) Pro-Life Association I especially thank you for your coverage of the abortion issue; it has been both thought-provoking and sensitive.

I felt, however, that I should respond to two on-going misconceptions, evident in the Oct. 20 article, "CPJ recommends ...."

The first is the perception that Pro-Life/Right to Life groups are individualistic because they are only concerned with the unborn child's rights and not the needs of the mother. This idea has been strongly advanced by the secular media, along with the idea that pro-lifers are moralistic fanatics.

My experience with the pro-life movement dates from the summer of 1987. During those two-and-one-half years I have been convicted again and again by the strong testimonies of compassion from individual pro-life workers I have met. Furthermore, it has become apparent that pro-life groups are as much involved in helping women in distress and encouraging others to do so as they are concerned about unborn children.

Just recently, Halton Right to Life opened a pregnancy distress centre where no one else would. And a church newsletter inspired an area baby shower that provided four carloads of baby and maternity items for Niagara Life Centre in Beamsville.

Pro-life workers are aware that it is not enough to have a law prohibiting abortion without having a social network which does not force a woman to choose between poverty and abortion.

Medical treatment, yes; abortion, no

The other misconception that I wish to address is the idea that a law which would allow abortion in the case of a serious threat to the life or health of the mother but prohibits abortion for social economic reasons is a pro-life law. The bottom line as to whether a law is pro-life or not, notwithstanding its need to be part of a large pro-life social program, is whether or not it works to stop abortion.

Every pro-life person agrees that the former therapeutic abortion committees were highly unsatisfactory as a means of controlling abuses of the old law. It was the uneven application of the old law by these committees that allowed the law to be struck down. Therefore, we should not fool ourselves that we will be able to obtain stronger controls on a new law.

We need a law that allows the treatment of a pregnant woman, even if that results in the death of her unborn child; we don't need a law that vaguely accepts abortion as a medical treatment.

Finally, as Christians who believe that human beings do not naturally choose good, we must realize that just providing equitable programs to help the distressed pregnant woman does not necessarily mean she will choose life. That is why it is so necessary to have a law that enshrines the right to life of all human beings from conception to natural death.

Jacqui Eisen
Welland, Ont.

Desperate need for organ donors

We were pleased to see the article "Nursing students to study the ethics of organ transplants" in the September 15 issue. The writer stated that doctors and others on transplant teams vote on whether a patient will or will not be accepted onto the transplant waiting list. There is always the question, as you say, "whether a person has a 'right' to this essential health care and whether there should ever be a 'line-up,' which means that some cannot receive a transplant."

We would like to emphasize that there is indeed a "line-up" due to the severe shortage of organs. I and others in the Christian community have been through the difficult and emotional time of being assessed to see if we were suitable candidates for transplant.

In addition to the families of Mary Steenland, Bill Langeveld and Peter Vandenburg, the York (Ont.) Region Transplant Awareness Group strives to increase the public's awareness of organ donation. The Steenlands, Langevelds and other donor families have reached beyond their grief and have given others new hope with a second chance of life.

We ask that people please sign the organ donor card on their driver's licence, and most importantly discuss your wishes with your family. If only 50 per cent of potential donors gave their organs there would be enough for everyone who needed a transplant.

The York Region Transplant Awareness Group is now planning the Second Transplant Games Day to be held in April 1990. Last April, approximately 1,000 people attended the First Transplant Games Day. We encourage Ontario residents who are recipients, donor families, those on waiting lists and all interested individuals to call or write us so we can keep you up to date on our plans for the day.

Call Susan Lise, (416) 775-4241, or Beverly Veenstra, (416) 841-5729, or write the York Region Transplant Group, R.R.#3, King City, ON L0G 1K0.

Thanks to *Calvinist Contact* for its role in increasing the public's awareness of organ donation.

Susan Lise
Holland Marsh, Ont.

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MEN'S ALL-NIGHT FISHING, FOOLISHNESS & FELLOWSHIP
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TAKE ME NOW, LORD

News

Hamilton Christian High dedicates new facility

Bert Witvoet

ANCASTER, Ont. — It probably ranks as the show piece of Christian secondary schooling in Canada. Situated on 19.2 acres at the eastern edge of Ancaster, the new Hamilton District Christian High School, all 68,000 square feet of it, stands as a testimony to prosperity, generosity, dedication and co-operation, the sort of things officials tend to lump together as "blessings."

The dedication ceremonies took place on Saturday, October 14. Keynote speaker Dr. Joel Nederhood addressed the audience of about 600 on the topic "Free Education." His choice of topic, as well as what he said, arose out of the context of a recent visit he made to the Soviet Union.

While Christians in the Soviet Union are experiencing greater freedom than before, they do not have the opportunities we as Christians have in North America, said Nederhood. "There are millions of Christians in the world who would give their right arm to have something like this facility."

Now that we have this freedom, what are we going to teach our children? Nederhood asked. He came up with three items for the curriculum: the past, life and love.

History, especially biblical history, gives us essential information for living. Teaching in the light of scripture opens students up to the life that God wants them to have. Love is the power that makes the Christian community strong. On the last point Nederhood remarked that Soviet Christians don't have a lot of things we have, "but one thing they do have plenty of — love."

Greetings were offered to the school by municipal leaders, Christian school officials and those who oversaw the construction. A school choir and band offered musical expressions of praise and thanksgiving. A cornerstone was unveiled that carried the same inscription which for more than 25 years graced the Athens Street cornerstone: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge."

Spacious, pleasant facilities

Principal Ron Dirkse explained to this reporter after the festivities that 25 staff and students moved all the furniture and equipment in three days at the end of the summer. He was grateful that there had been no accidents or injuries.

He described the school as spacious and not having the feeling of an institution. When a painter complained that a normal school "usually has no more than five colours and this school uses 28 colours," Dirkse only smiled. "There is only one word that describes this school," he said — *"gezellig."*

Reports have it that staff and students are very upbeat this year. Little wonder. The school has 25 classrooms, a double gymnasium/auditorium, three technical classrooms, a music room, staff rooms, library, cafeteria, guidance and counselling area and general offices.

Good stewardship

The total cost of land, building and new furnishings came to $5,260,000. This compares very favourably with other new schools, said Dirkse. Whereas HDCH is built for 500 students, a Cayuga high school for 600 students cost $11 million, and a new high school in Waterdown, also for 600 students, $15.5 million.

Dirkse traced the difference in cost to the generous offer of sale of the property by society members Mr. and Mrs. Cecil Kuurstra (19.2 acres and a three-bedroom house for $260,000), to the good planning and supervision of the building committee, to architect and engineer Jerry Heeringa, and of Demik Construction, and to the willingness on the part of the trades to do good work at reasonable cost. The building was on time and on budget.

According to promotional director Herman Louter , more than two million dollars has already been raised by the society. Various members of the HDCH school community in attendance at the dedication ceremonies were enthusiastic, agreeing that the building is a testimony to the grace of God through the faithfulness of his people.

Salem sets off down new road

Marian Van Til

MISSISSAUGA, Ont. — Salem Christian Mental Health Association's annual meeting at the end of September marked several firsts for that organization. Salem's new executive director, Albert Dreise, presented his inaugural address to the group; the meeting was held at Salem's new main office on Atlantic Drive in Mississauga, and this occasion was the first time Salem's membership got a chance to sample the "flavour of the association's new vision and direction," to use Dreise's words.

Dreise spoke of that vision and direction in his address. The last few years for the 25-year-old organization have been rocky, but during that time Salem has been evaluating itself. It now "sees the need to be more connected with the church in a more integrated, systemic, covenantal way," Dreise explained. Its work will focus on making use of the Christian community's resources in the "pursuit of emotional and spiritual well-being."

Salem now has three major objectives, as Dreise sees it: first, "to help and support churches to be the healing communities God has made them to be"; second, "to animate the resources toward mental health available within these communities, and to connect them with resources elsewhere"; and "to identify the need for Christian mental health services and assist the Christian community to develop and implement such services."

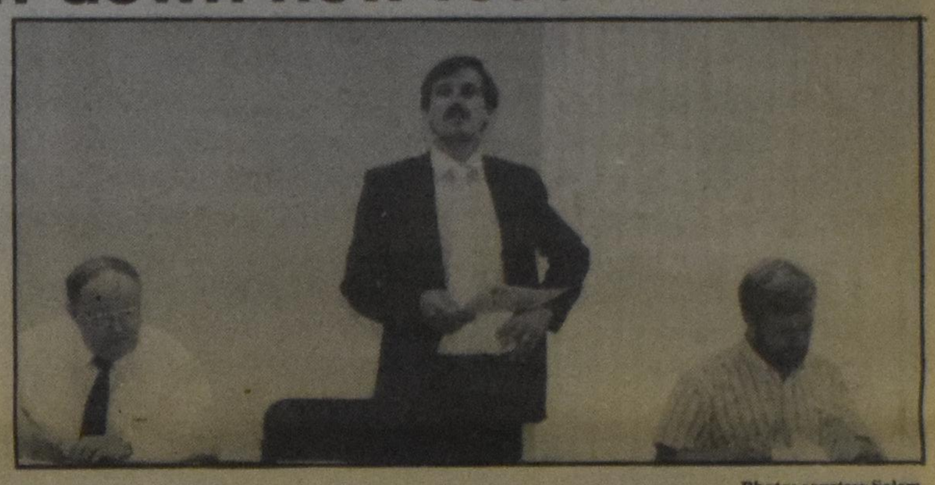


Photo: courtesy Salem

Salem board chairperson Ren Siebenga (standing) holds forth at the organization's annual membership meeting while secretary John Lutgendorff (l) takes notes and retiring treasurer John Haanstra checks his notes.

Dreise says he hopes to work closely with pastors and office-bearers in the church, "training and assisting them," and helping to "connect them to appropriate community resources and services." Salem also will "attempt ... to develop a set of Christian counselling guidelines and value principles."

Salem's members approved a plan which will set up a "revocable private trust" to manage the association's assets. The trust fund will be administered by "a minimum of five trustees" and managed separately from Salem's operating budget. Proceeds from the trust will supplement the monies required to operate Salem, but the balance of funds will still need to come from membership fees and donations. A separate "projects" budget item is "indicative of Salem's desire to assist local groups," explains Dreise.

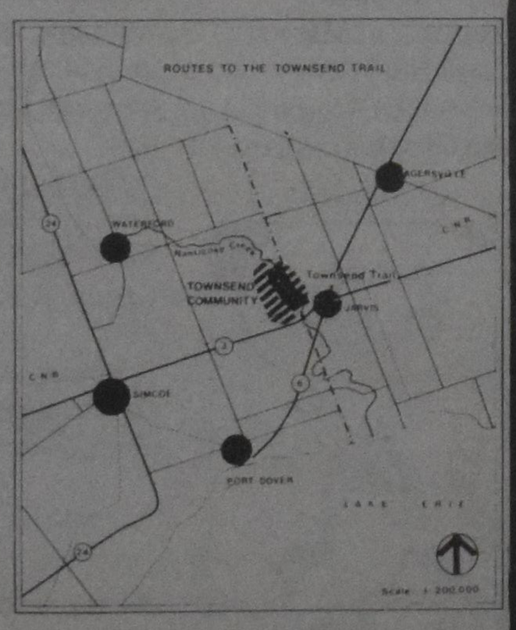
Members also approved the sale of 3.5 acres of Salem-owned land in Brampton, Ont., to Holland Christian Homes. That organization intends to build high-rise senior citizens condominiums on the land.

At its Hamilton Counselling Clinic, Salem provides individual, marriage, and family therapy as well as educational assessments, consultation and counselling in (especially) Christian elementary and high schools. Clients either come in after hearing about Salem themselves or referred by doctors, pastors or agencies. The Hamilton clinic currently has two full-time counsellors and a consultant who provides clinical supervision.

Salem Christian Mental Health Association's ultimate goal is to "facilitate emotional and spiritual wholeness," says Al Dreise. It will try to do that by engaging in talks and workshops, family life education, services to professionals and research and development, granting bursaries/scholarships, producing pamphlets and offering conferences and community support. But to be successful, Dreise adds, "Salem will need to rely on the transforming presence of the Holy Spirit and the compassion of the body of Christ to achieve *shalom*."

Brookview Home
A Senior Citizen Apartment
Information Meeting:
Saturday, November 18, 1989
1-5 p.m.

The Board of Nanticoke Christian Senior Citizen Home Inc. have developed plans to expand their Townsend Retirement Village. Construction will start soon in building a 38 unit apartment complex, a 28 unit retirement lodge and a large amenities building. The apartment units will be leased on a pre-paid life lease plan with both one bedroom and two bedroom units available. To view these plans and to learn more about the life-lease concept attend the information meeting at the existing Valleyview Home in Townsend, near Jarvis, anytime between 1 and 5 p.m. on Nov. 18. Refreshments will be served. If you're interested in an apartment unit don't delay as they will be available on a first come first serve basis. For more details call:



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Cinema summaries

Marian Van Til

The Fabulous Baker Boys

Rated AA
Stars Jeff Bridges, Beau Bridges, Michelle Pfeiffer
Directed by Steve Kloves

The Fabulous Baker Boys is a character study; unfortunately, that's unusual among recent films. Frank and Jack Baker (well-played by brothers Beau and Jeff Bridges) have been a duo piano act for 15 years, playing pop tunes in second-class Seattle hotels and night clubs to ever dwindling audiences.

They've been doing the same old thing for so long, in the same old way, that they could play *Feelings* blindfolded. And their own feelings *have* become blindfolded. The patterns of their relationship were laid in childhood and neither man gives any thought to his brother as a *person*.

Frank is a family man who takes care of their business in order to make sure his home fires keep burning. Jack, younger and unmarried, is a womanizer. He's much more imaginative than Frank (he's a frustrated jazz pianist), but is too irresponsible to make it on his own and he's dead scared of commitment.

When the Baker boys decide they need a vocalist to spice up their sluggish act, they hire Suzie Diamond (Pfeiffer), a sultry, inexperienced but naturally gifted singer with a less than sterling background. They couldn't have foreseen her impact.

Wake-up call

Though Jack falls for Suzie, the story doesn't take the usual odd-person-out turns. Suzie's presence pries open old resentments between the brothers. It forces them to evaluate their intertwined careers and their insubstantial relationship.

This film has a lot going for it and should work, but it only works some of the time. First-time director Steve Kloves tried hard to buck Hollywood prescriptions (it was thought this would not be a "bankable" story, particularly with the low-profile Beau Bridges in a lead role.) There *is* a certain freshness to Kloves' approach but it's not consistently applied. When the parts are put together to make the whole, that whole seems less than the parts.

Despite Kloves' and the actors' best intentions the three protagonists remain rather unlikable people with whom the audience cannot empathize much. That being true, the film's message seems to vapourize. Unfortunately, this character study that seems to offer substantial food for thought melts like meringue upon the tasting.

MEDIA SCAN

Henry Knoop

The story behind the story

I think I'm probably like most viewers when I sit down to watch a program on TV. I focus on the characters and the story, whether I'm watching a drama or a comedy. After all, that's where the entertainment is, isn't it? The message?

It's interesting, though, to shift focus once in a while and examine the *settings* of programs — the houses, the clothes, the possessions and the lifestyle of the characters. Doing so quickly reveals a pattern: most of them are the same. And this "sameness" communicates a message sometimes as powerful as the main storyline.

Some obvious examples are evident in what are called "the evening soaps" — programs such as "Dallas," "Dynasty," and "Falcon Crest." Much has been written about the opulent lifestyle of their characters, and I suppose if there's a moral in these programs somewhere, it could be that riches don't buy happiness or that wealth leads to corruption.

But what about "regular" programs? you know, like "Growing Pains," "Who's the Boss?," "Designing Women," "The Golden Girls," or "Cosby"? What do their settings tell us?

Where are the leaks and cracks?

For the most part, their homes don't look like mine. They seem to be beautifully (and expensively) furnished, tastefully decorated, always neat, and extremely roomy. Their value is well out of my price range, as I suspect it would be for most viewers.

I can't recall the last time I saw a room that needed redecorating, old furniture that needed replacing, a bathroom fixture that leaked, an overgrown garden or flowerbed, a garage in need of paint.

And the clothes these TV characters wear always seem to be right in tune with the latest fashions. Even when they "dress casual" they don't look like me in my grass-stained lawnmowing shoes, my faded blue jeans, or my old T-shirt. And, like their floors, their clothes never seem to need washing. Laundry baskets — you hardly see them. Ironing boards — never!

Do TV parents ever go grocery shopping and come back with bags of food that get spread all over the kitchen floor? Do they go to school meetings, church and church meetings, or any community service organizations? Do they ever sit around at night and just watch TV or read the newspaper?

What kind of a world is this?

But that's just the point. Although some viewers may be able to identify with the homes, fashions, and lifestyles of these TV characters, the vast majority, I suspect, can't. Upper middle class is the economic setting of most programs, and there are a lot of people in North America who aren't there. As a matter of statistical fact, viewers who watch these programs the most are in a much lower economic class.

Coveted fantasy world

For these viewers, television presents a fantasy world, a world to emulate and desire. This economic level becomes the measure of success in a materialistic society. Viewing these programs not only provides an escape from economic reality, but also subtly reinforces a consumer-oriented value system very important to the financial success of commercial television.

There are exceptions, of course. "Roseanne," last season's surprise hit sitcom projected to replace "Cosby" at the top, provides a much needed alternative. Roseanne and Dan are non-professionals; they are "blue-collar" workers with ordinary jobs. Roseanne works in a factory and Dan is a contractor. Their home is much simpler and more modest. Their daily routines perhaps reflect more accurately the lifestyles of most viewers.

Television needs more of this type of economic alternative in its "regular" programming. Almost a generation ago, many viewers identified with Archie Bunker and his family in "All in the Family." Granted, the show's popularity centred around Archie's outspoken views, but the story behind the story also made viewers feel comfortable. He lived in a plain home and lived an ordinary working person's life. Despite all his faults, viewers liked him. "Roseanne" currently has that same kind of appeal.

At present, television would have you believe that you really haven't "made it" until you can look, dress, and live like upper middle class people. The commercials between program segments reinforce that view. Fortunately, many viewers know better.

Henry Knoop teaches at Ajax High School, Ajax, Ont.

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Church

Marian Van Til, page editor

African women's assembly makes major impact

NAIROBI, Kenya (WEF) — Two thousand women from 36 of Africa's 42 nations gathered here late this summer and clearly demonstrated the influence that evangelical women can wield in church and society across their continent. The appropriate theme of the Pan-Africa Christian Women Assembly (PACWA) was "Our time has come."

Judy Mbugua, chairperson of the PACWA executive committee, stated in her opening address that the purpose of PACWA was to "bring together Christian women from all over Africa to discuss national, continental, and international issues that affect life in Africa. PACWA has *one* vision: to reach Africa for Jesus Christ."

Kenya president Daniel arap Moi gave the address opening PACWA. That assured live coverage on television and radio, and front-page coverage in the national newspaper. But the press continued daily coverage and even editorialized on the assembly which met in the Kenyatta Conference Centre.

Plenary topics included a keynote address by Tokunboh Adeyemo on "God's power working in women," morning Bible expositions, and morning and late afternoon sessions on several topics, including "The cost for women in ministry," "Social justice," "Family life," "The role of women in society," "Christian stewardship, "AIDS," "Women and evangelism," and "Networking."

Diverse subjects, far-ranging impact

Workshops on 30 topics were conducted informally and provided practical material for the participants to put to use in their own ministries. Subjects included polygamy, alcoholism, training and development, the traditional role of women, and dealing with self-imposed limitations.

The assembly produced a covenant that deals with the status of women and subjects ranging from the family to economic development to evangelism. It also produced 30 resolutions on a variety of topics, some addressed to the church, some to governments, and others to PACWA itself.

Thorough planning, organization, and follow-through should help to assure that this event is far more than an inspirational conference. The idea for launching a women's movement was accepted by the leadership of the Association of Evangelicals of Africa and Madagascar (AEAM) at its Fifth General Assembly in Lusaka, Zambia, in 1987.

Over the last two years five pre-PACWA mini-consultations were held in English-speaking West Africa, French-speaking West Africa, French-speaking Central Africa, Southern Africa, and East Africa. Each consultation region presented its recommendations and proposed resolutions at PACWA for continent-wide review and adoption.

Follow-up activities are focused on the education of Christian women by extension and will concentrate on building a continental network, massive production of diagnostic educational tools for use in small groups, grass-roots education in each region, and ongoing workshops and seminars at the national and regional levels.

World Vision to assist San Francisco quake victims

MISSISSAUGA, Ont. (WVC) — The international Christian relief agency World Vision has joined efforts to assist victims of the 6.9 earthquake that struck the San Francisco area of northern California Oct. 17.

The agency, which operates 5,200 humanitarian projects in more than 70 countries, has sent a survey team to San Jose south of San Francisco. The team expects to go on to Oakland, a city connected to San Francisco by the Bay Bridge, which was cut off when a 30-foot section collapsed during the tremor.

The team will concentrate on organizing local churches to aid quake victims by channeling available relief supplies to their localities. World Vision, which has extensive experience with overseas disasters and their aftermaths, also will seek ways to mobilize local churches to provide psychological support and long-term rehabilitation needs to people affected by the quake.

Donors may send contributions for earthquake victims to World Vision, Box 2500, Streetsville P.O., Mississauga, ON L5M 2H2.

Panamanian government decrees doctors must perform abortions regardless of their religious convictions

PANAMA CITY, Panama (EP) — The government of Panama, a Latin American country heavily populated by Catholics, recently decreed that doctors who work in public hospitals must perform abortions in certain cases regardless of their religious convictions. Abortions in Panama are legal in the cases of rape or incest or when the life of the mother or the child is threatened.

The World Federation of Doctors Who Respect Human Life, a pro-life medical organization, strongly protested the government's actions. In an August statement they called upon the Panamanian government to "intervene fully" against the policy, pointing out that "only in totalitarian regimes have doctors been forced to kill children through abortion."

Panama's Attorney General Olmedo Sanjur said that "the doctor who works in a state health center is a public servant ... religious or ethical [convictions] cannot be claimed ... in a situation where a public servant must, by legal mandate, perform a given task assigned to his work." Sanjur added that the job security of doctors "shall be determined by [their] loyalty ... in service."

The World Federation of Doctors Who Respect Human Life insisted in their statement that a "doctor of medicine is not a slave of the state" and firmly supported its "colleagues in Panama who have refused to kill children yet to be born [and who] have every right to do so, whatever codes or regulations there might be that say otherwise."

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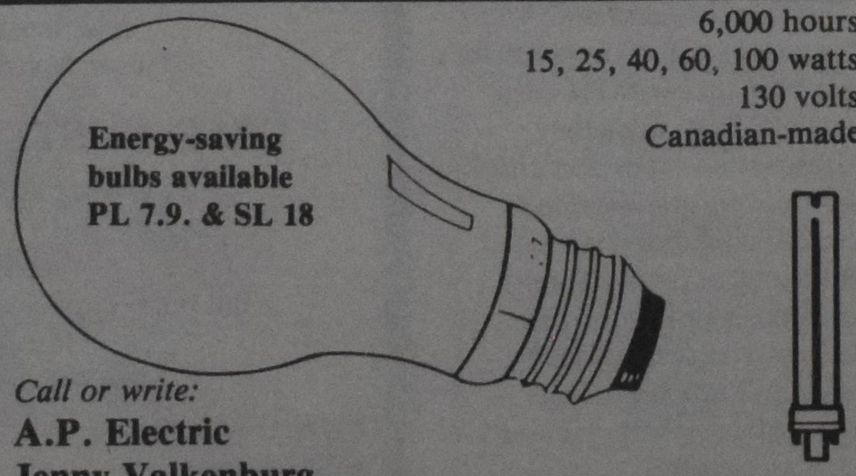

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East Germans take refuge in churches

BERLIN, East Germany (EP) — Hundreds of East German protesters have found that churches are places of refuge where the police will not try to harrass or arrest them or keep them from doing as they wish.

East Berlin's Lutheran Church of Gethsemane is one such place where hundreds were packed inside for some time after police broke up a demonstration in the working-class neighbourhood of Prenzlauer Berg October 7.

Although East Germany is communist-run and traditionally atheist, police will not enter churches or church property to make an arrest, and so for the time being demonstrators are safe there. Protestant churches throughout East Germany have played a key role in relations between Communist leaders and their opposition.

The Rev. Bernd Albani, pastor of Gethsemane, pointed out that the church does not take a political stand, or speak for the opposition, but that its role is to support its people and to end the detention of those in prison.

First issue of new German-language newspaper for Kanadier Mennonite youth published

STEINBACH, Man. (MCC) — The first issue of a new German-language newspaper intended to address the educational needs of Kanadier Mennonite youth rolled off the press last month.

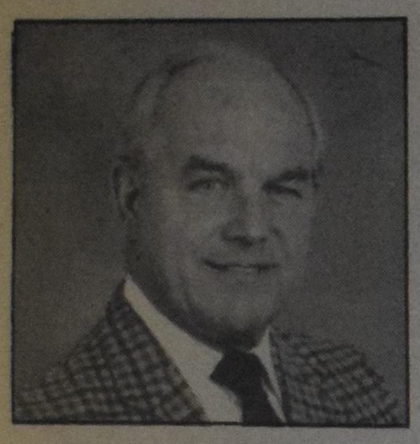
Das Blatt (The Paper), a 24-page magazine-style publication, was included as a supplement in the September 15 *DieMennonitsche Post*. Filled with stories, puzzles, games, Bible stories and a pen-pal section, *Das Blatt* is intended to be a fun way for youth in Mennonite colonies in Latin America to learn grammar, geography, history, science and about the world.

According to *Post* editor Abe Warkentin, "The need for a children's paper has been obvious for years because of an extremely limited school curriculum in many of the conservative colonies."

Although some colonies have excellent schools, others use an educational system that has not changed "in 100 years," Warkentin says. Many children receive little or no instruction in history, health, science or geography. The new paper is intended to augment educational efforts in the colonies.

The first issue was sent out free; *Das Blatt* will then be offered monthly on a subscription basis. Since the paper will be very difficult for many families to afford, the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC Canada) is accepting donations for the educational project. As well, columnists and writers are encouraged to submit articles on science, geography, history, health, Bible stories and other topics.

Die *Post*, which is published in Steinbach, Man., has a circulation of 5,500 in Mexico, Belize, Paraguay and Bolivia. It is part of the MCC Canada Kanadier Concerns program.



Canadian Church Scene

Jacob Kuntz

Fragile country, churches and neighbours

On Canadian leadership

In the *Catholic Register* of August 19 Peter Trueman makes a few non-flattering remarks about present political leadership in Canada. We quote some of the comments he makes, skipping a few passages on the matter of free trade. The title of his article says it all: "Treating Canada like a football."

I don't know how much longer Canada can put up with the kind of political leadership it's been getting lately, not just in Ottawa but in the provincial capitals as well.

In Pierre Trudeau, we had a wealthy, intellectual, Francophone prime minister with a compelling vision of Canada, but who failed to understand the need and aspirations of ordinary Canadians.

In Brian Mulroney, we have a bilingual, Quebecois Anglophone from a modest background who has some feeling for ordinary people but who does not understand the country.

In the provincial capitals, we have far too many premiers who, as a matter of course and political expediency, put their own provinces and regions ahead of the country as a whole.

Meech Lake is sufficient proof of that. Although the controversial constitutional accord surprised and delighted Premier Bourassa, the feature that sold it to the other provinces was not that it gave more power to Quebec, but that it gave more power to all of them.

Premiers Devine, Vander Zalm, and Peckford, for example, could hardly be described as wildly francophone. And on past performance, it seems unlikely that they agreed to Meech Lake only for the good of the nation as a whole.

I blame the Mulroney government for a lot of what's wrong, and the prime minister in particular for what seems to be his conviction that negotiation can always produce a compromise, and that a compromise is always desirable."

But what could one expect of a prime minister with minimal experience in affairs of state? He does not have a historian's view, or a political scientist's view, or even a poet's view of Canada.

He is an Anglophone Quebecker from the North shore, who went to a Maritime university for undergraduate studies, and who took a law degree from Laval University in Quebec, a background not calculated to give him a broad vision of the country as a whole.

He later made a reputation as a legal wheeler-dealer settling labour disputes for Montreal's St. James Street. Success was what could be negotiated while keeping his principals in the black.

Principles didn't have much to do with it.

Canada is a fragile concept and the Mulroney Tories and the premiers have been booting it around as if it were a football.

I'm not sure the country will survive much more brutality.

Parting shot

The controversial editor of *The United Church Observer* has resigned. In his last "Observations" he expresses his dreams for the United Church which, he feels, is "too cautious, too concerned with numbers." He wants a church that is much more radical, a church for the poor and oppressed.

There's nothing wrong with being a liberal or radical church. It's much closer to the Gospel than a church filled with self-righteousness and thou-shalt-nots.

If the United Church recaptures its prophetic voice, the one that does what is right rather than expedient, I'll cheer all the way from Africa. If one thing sickens me, it's the idea that the pastoral should be used to sugar-coat the prophetic because we don't want to alienate some sector of society — usually government or business. The church is not supposed to be a chaplaincy service to the established order — it's supposed to challenge it, and I believe that's being pastoral.

I wish the United Church would understand what a preferential option for the poor and oppressed really means. Or, to put it in another way, to understand in its heart, its gut, that the good news of the gospel is good news to the poor, not just to the rich, which is the way society sees it. We have this option as church policy just as we declare apartheid to be a heresy. But how many poor people are in our pews or would feel welcome there? Or single mothers? Gay and lesbian people? Visible minorities, or any one "different" from our middle class, white church?

And for *The Observer,* which I modestly think is the best magazine of its kind around, I hope the church will allow its staff the freedom to speak out with integrity. It must be the church's loyal opposition; it must follow the principle of the people's right to know without restrictions. To do less would deprive members of the kind of information needed to make responsible decisions. It is utter nonsense for the faint-hearted to say that the truth might damage readers' faith or reduce their givings. If that's true there isn't much faith or commitment.

Presbyterians and Palestinians

The editor of the *Presbyterian Record* warns his readers, in the issue of September 1989, that our warm feelings for Israel and the Jews may not make us close our eyes for injustices that are committed by the Jews in their treatment of the Palestinians. The church has spoken out on the apartheid issue, the church should not hesitate either to also say something on what goes on between Israel and the Palestinians.

Who ever enjoys criticizing friends? Even more difficult when in the past you have not always treated that friend with either justice or generosity. In such situations past sins and guilt often silence us.

That describes much of the present relationship between Christians and Jews over Palestinians' rights and their desire for a homeland of their own. Many of us reluctantly criticize Israel for its actions in relation to the Palestinians. But should the Palestinians be allowed to suffer because of our guilt? That dilemma afflicts all thinking Christians today.

Before anything at all is said about the Palestinian situation, Christians must always preface it with an unequivocal affirmation of the right of Israel to exist and prosper.

Almost exclusively we have known the Jews as victims. But even the oppressed have the power to become the oppressors. Christians cannot remain silent and inactive when Palestinians seeking their rights are detained in jail, when homes are demolished on mere suspicion with no court order, and people are deported from their homeland without due process of law. Some of these are our brothers and sisters in Christ.

The Church has spoken clearly on South Africa. It cannot do less about Israel and the Palestinians, even though the pain may be greater when the oppressor is our friend.

Nor can we afford to be less courageous on this issue than that small group of Jews, both within Israel and abroad, who have declared that if Israel continues its present policy towards the Palestinians, they endanger the soul of their nation.

Jacob Kuntz is pastor of First Christian Reformed Church, Kitchener, Ont.

North-South church co-operation studied

INDIANAPOLIS, Indiana (EP) — The National Council of Churches is planning a five-day "eavluation consultation" which will focus on the needs of churches in North America, Latin America, and the Caribbean, and explore ways of enhancing their relationships with one another.

The conference is "the latest step in the ongoing ecumenical 'Sao Paulo Process' in which churches in the U.S., Latin America, and the Caribbean are seeking new models for North-South church relations," according to a news report, "Particularly to end the 'donor-recipient' mindset that has characterized 'First World-Third World' church relationships for many years." One hundred and twenty delegates from these regions attended the conference which began October 9.

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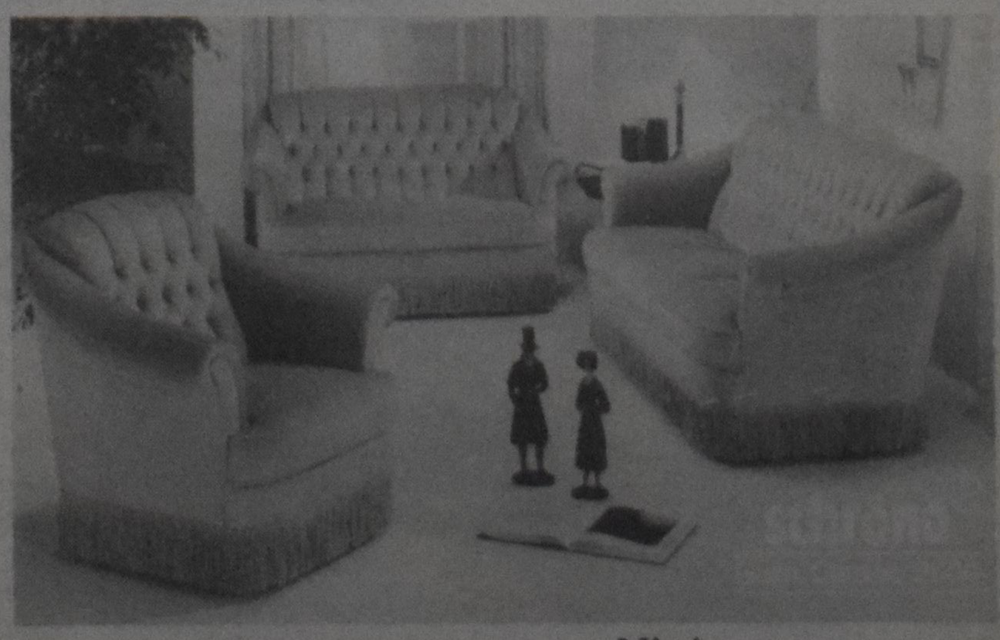

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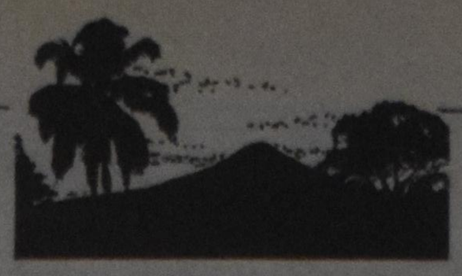


The emerald sash (1)

Ed Vanderkloet

This summer I toured Nigeria (where my daughter works in missions). I went to Indonesia as well. From 1948 to 1950 I served in the Dutch army in Indonesia. Now, 40 years later, I fulfilled an old dream of revisiting that country, mostly Sumatra, strictly for the sake of *auld lang syne*. In a series of five articles I will record some of my impressions.

Medan, Old Glory

In grade school during the '30s we learned that Indonesia (or the Dutch East Indies, as it was then called) was "the emerald sash that wraps itself around the equator." *(De gordel van smaragd die zich slingert om de evenaar)*. The expression may be a bit lyrical but it is not an exaggeration, for the country is indescribably beautiful.

Within that emerald sash, the city of Medan (capital of Sumatra) was considered by many to be the pearl that outshone all other pearls. I think the statement was overdone, but Medan was indeed a city of which to be proud. A lonely Dutch pioneer, Jacobus Nienhuys, obstinate as a mule, utterly determined, and imbued with a vision, changed the mangrove jungles and the snake-infested swamps of northeast Sumatra into the richest tobacco country of the world. Deli, as the area is called, became a byword on stockmarkets everywhere.

All this happened in the previous century and the early part of this century. Medan grew into a city of splendour, with white- and cream-coloured business palaces, a mosque that was called the Taj Mahal of the Indies, and a sultan's palace that drew envious visitors all the way from Turkey.

That's how I remembered Medan from 1950 when I spent a few months there. I had been warned that the place "ain't what it used to be," and one writer even called it "the filthiest place he had ever seen on the face of the earth." Obviously, the man hadn't seen much of the face of the earth for there are infinitely dirtier places.

Frankly, Medan is still a beautiful town. The glittering buildings of the colonial era can be seen in all their splendour. Hotel De Boer, the Deli Railway Company, the Bank of Java, the huge post office are all still there, although the names have changed. The luxurious foliage is also still the same. And Polonia, the southern suburb, radiates the same glamour it did in bygone days.

What spoils the place are some ugly slum areas and especially the awful air pollution caused by thousands of smoke-belching becaks*, three-wheeled passenger motorbikes whose pungent exhausts assault the nostrils. Their drivers descend on you like locusts on a green field the moment you show your face outside the hotel. I make a deal with one whose English is tolerable. His name is Saul, and for 5,000 rupiahs he drives me around the city and faithfully shows me all the sights.

At the end of the tour we agree that for Rp 350,000 (about $350) he and his brother will drive me in their taxi to all the places on northern and central Sumatra where I had been stationed during my army time 40 years ago. That sounds like a lot of money but it covers a distance of almost 1,000 kilometres for me and twice that much for them since they have to return home.

Siantar: Then and Now

After two days of sightseeing in Medan we set off on our first leg of the journey and our destination is Pematang Siantar (Siantar for short)

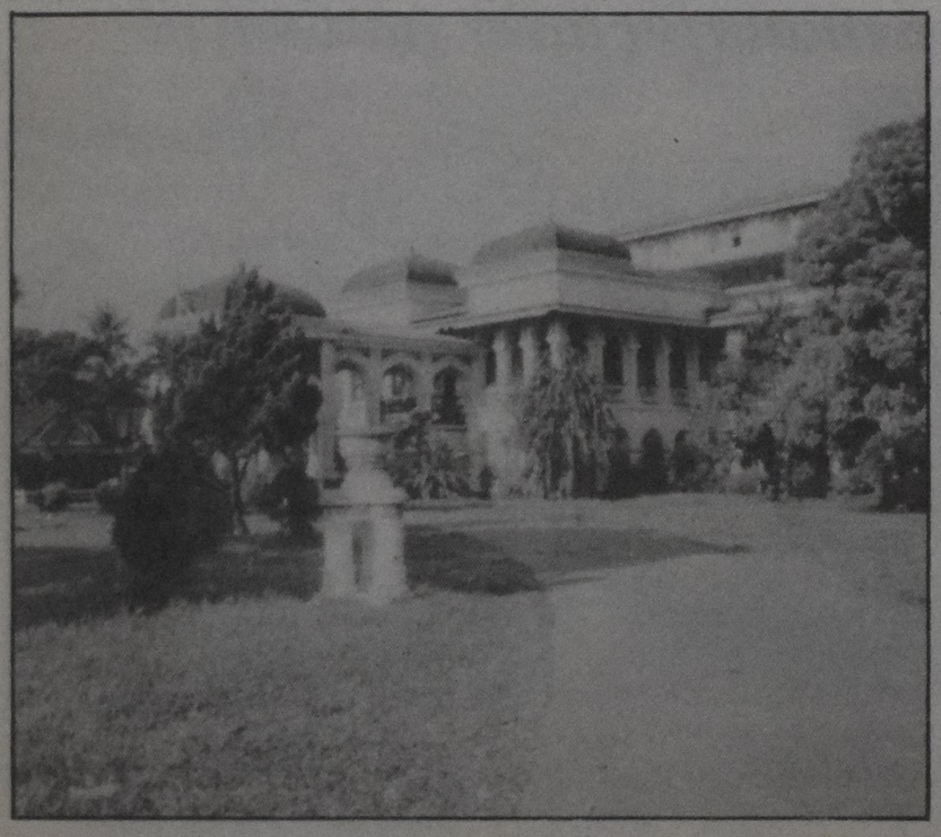


Photo: Ed Vanderkloet
Palace Sultan of Deli in Medan.

where I had lived for about half-a-year.

I look forward to seeing the old buildings again but to my disappointment, they are all gone. Our NCO mess, the office, the military repair shop have all been replaced by rows of sores and a movie theatre. There is one building that's still there, a beautiful mansion where we spent the last few weeks of our stay in Siantar. The building is now the Balai Kota or City Hall.

And then there is the Siantar Hotel, a fantastic place then and now — modern, surrounded by exotic shrubs and trees such as palms, flamboyants, mangoes, bananas and huge ferns. What makes me angry is the inscribed pillar in front of the hotel glorifying the declaration of independence in 1945.

I am not an old colonial who rues the demise of the Dutch empire. But to place a freedom monument there, right in front of the Siantar Hotel, is in poor taste. For in November 1945, two Dutch and two Swiss planters, one of them with his wife, finally freed from three-and-a-half years in a Japanese camp, returned to their beloved Siantar to restore their neglected plantations. They were warmly welcomed by the people. But one evening armed men appeared, broke into this very same hotel and hacked the five to a gruesome death. That's why we had been in Indonesia, to curb the violence of the mob, to restore law, order and peace.

Lo and behold, I find something that has stayed the same — the gorge and the creek that flows through it. I have a 1949 picture with me standing at the bottom, and now I have a shot 40 years later of the same spot. Culture changes much, nature very little.

And then there is the Siantar Zoological Gardens, a lofty name for a dismal place. I find it much the same, but the scruffy orang-utan had gone. He was an irascible old critter who expected you to feed him bananas or peanuts. If you didn't give him anything he would spit in your face or, as happened to a friend of mine, pee all over you from his perch behind the fence.

The big Batak church is still there but had changed for the better and is now flanked by several church schools. A large sign in front announces the 125th anniversary of

Photo: Ed Vanderkloet
Batak church in Siantar.

Christianity's entrance into Batakland. That is the most gratifying part of my visit to both Nigeria and Indonesia, the visible evidence "that the Son of God through his Spirit and Word, ... gathers, protects, and preserves for himself a community ... united in true faith" *(Heidelberg Catechism,* LD 21).

Each night I faithfully swallow my Paludrin pills and once a week two gall-bitter Chloroquine tablets, all against the malaria, for King Anopheles (the mosquito that carries the malaria parasite) still slays his thousands every year. Sometimes I feel like a travelling drug store: malaria pills, Zantac tablets for my ulcer, aspirin against headaches, Imodium against the runs, Alka Seltzer for heartburn, Noxzema for skin rash, plus an assortment of cosmetics without which no Westerner can live, or so he or she thinks. In the army we didn't have all that stuff, except quinine, which we took faithfully but which did not stop me from contracting malaria anyway.

What I never saw on this trip were spiders. Forty years ago there were lots. Actually I hate spiders, I'm afraid of them; it's a phobia I cannot shake off. Once I fought with an exceptionally big one right here in Siantar and slew him with an air rifle. It's a heroic story which I won't repeat; I already wrote about it in C.C. a few years ago.

During my walks through the town I am accosted by a teenager who asks me where I come from. First, I suspect a street hawker trying to tell me he has a very special deal for me. But he turns out to be an inquisitive high school student who wants to practise his halting English. We sit on a bench in the park and have an animated discussion. He is a Batak and a fervent believer in the Lord, delighted to hear that I am a fellow traveller on the Way. My little souvenir, a CLAC ballpoint, he accepts with embarrassing gratitude. A violent rainsquall makes us part ways.

**For some obscure reason the Indonesian government decreed quite a few years ago that the tj-sound (in Dutch) or ch (in English as in charity) should be spelled with a simple letter c. I have followed that practice even though I don't like it. Hence a betjak is now becak, Poentjak is Puncak, Atjeh is Aceh, etc.*

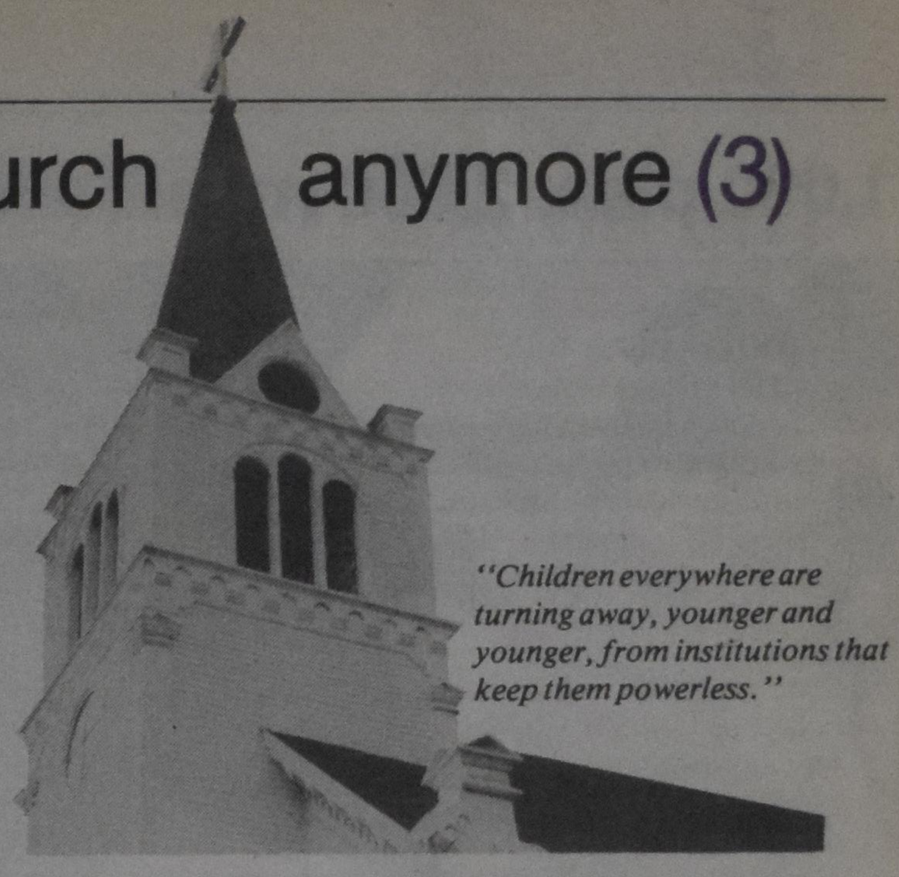
Ed Vanderkloet is researcher for the Christian Labour Association of Canada. He lives in Rexdale, Ont.

Why not all my children go to church anymore (3)

Hurting parents listen to their children

Adrian Peetoom

In two previous articles I acknowledged the increasing pain and sorrow of Christian parents who see their young adult children turn their backs on church life. I tried to suggest that "causes" are not easy to determine, that they reside also in the broad cultural patterns of our day and in the specific choices our children make.



"Children everywhere are turning away, younger and younger, from institutions that keep them powerless."

When I first wrote the three articles, I left the draft manuscripts with Johanna and four daughters (plus two boyfriends) for a weekend while I served as workshop leader at the 1989 Ontario ICS conference.

I asked them to read the articles and discuss them in any way they wished, and I would abide by their decision whether and in what way to ask *Calvinist Contact* to publish them. They all encouraged me to seek publication, and they had put their discussions on tape.

Stories of the times

I listened to the tape in my study, and then I rewrote the articles, particularly this third one. I heard talk so moving and powerful that the room could barely contain the emotions, theirs or mine.

It is a 70-minute story of the faith life of our family, the good and the not so good. There are tears on it, and laughter too. Blessings and curses. Deep faith and stark disobedience.

Each of our children has her own story, and the boyfriends took part with their observations and parts of their own tales. Each child had unique narratives to tell, about the good ... and the bad ... and the ugly. To the same teachings and examples different ones had reacted differently. I heard testimony to both faith and unbelief, and sometimes I sensed God and Satan present both. For a while my study was the centre of the universe.

I heard specific individuals speak. I heard the family speak. I heard the Church speak. I heard the promises of God. I heard our culture. I got some of my own words back, spoken long ago, some to haunt me, and some to comfort me. I heard great insight and I heard the lack of it. While listening I saw the narrow way and the broad way.

This talk does not guarantee that all my children will be the citizens of the Kingdom that my heart urges them to be part of. Ultimately, this tape is not about them, about our family or even about my articles. In the end, this tape contains the redemption of God present in our lives, specifically ragged and broken at so many edges.

Sharing recommended

So the details of this tape are not for readers of *Calvinist Contact,* not now and maybe not ever. But I'm compelled to suggest, and with some urgency, that parents bruised as we are seek to unite their own children around this topic, for a similarly gentle sharing and loving. It may not be necessary to tape your own talks, although I think it's better if you could.

You may have to pay a stiff price of courage, persistence and time, if your family is not used to openness within its bosom. Ironically, I wonder a bit whether my absence may have contributed to the openness on our tape! Fathers often inhibit daughters.

What will such an event (or series of them) accomplish? No more than what intimate talk always offers: open doors to further intimacy; experiences of bonding and harmony; knowledge of each other; opportunities to serve with encouragement and reproof; self-knowledge; a framework for repentance. The participants will discover that it's safe (and sound) to share with others, for in doing so you get to know yourself much better.

Church evaluated

There is only one conclusion I want to share from that tape. Without exception, the participants voiced their profound disappointments with what church experiences had taught them about faith. Church education to them had meant no more than doctrines: verbal formulations and prescribed ways of acting and being. And as I thought about what they had said, I began to review the manner in which the church had taught me all my life. And I agreed with them.

Klaas Runia also looked at that in the book I cited in the first article. He, too, points to the responsibilities church-leavers bear for their own actions, but he, too, is critical of his own personal church history, and I found what he said echoing in my own memories.

I lump together the demonstrations my parents and their friends gave me of what really mattered to a church member, through early boys' clubs, catechism, Christian schools, young people's societies, and the church's teaching carried by its preaching and official congregational actions.

What mattered most (not only, but most) was this: faith is believing the right things, the right doctrines in the right proportions and behaving in specific ways. When I think of people I was made to admire the most, I see severe "learned" men (only men!) weighing carefully who and what could be doctrinally trusted.

I witnessed a church schism (1944 in the Netherlands) and much bitterness even between close family members after that. It's not difficult to find some very unloving things being said about Canadian Christian churches in the early issues of *Calvinist Contact,* always on doctrinal grounds.

Chatham has six Reformed congregations, five of which would not have existed but for people of my own post-war Dutch Calvinist ilk. However, these six are part of four different denominations and I have not seen much evidence of co-operation among them.

I have a notion that various members in various pews give the others little thought, for each congregation is defined, in theory and in practice, by presumed "differences in doctrines," and no one is inclined to think the other better than itself. And within the denomination I'm part of there's regularly some vicious stuff flaring up, in print sometimes, and mostly about the presumed needs to dot ever more Is and cross Ts.

Of course, I also learned some very different lessons, about real sharing, patience, forbearance, hospitality, modesty, gentleness, meekness and the other virtues the Apostles recommend. I saw Jesus in fellow members, and my memories stretch way back to my very young years. If I hadn't, it's likely that I would not be a member of the Body of Christ myself today.

But those lessons were never held up front by the *official actions of most congregations of which I was part.* They were taught — mostly in passing — by people who had learned to act better than their official church policy. Ironically, I remember far more women than men as my teachers! Far more ministers' wives than ministers. Far more young people than adults.

Another world

My children have not experienced the strong "doctrinal" conflicts I have. But the official teaching they have received exhibited that enduring blind spot about faith being ultimately a matter of believing the right doctrines.

Back to my children. The world of my children is no longer the world of my own younger days. Children today know so much more, have experienced so much more, have seen so much more in travel and on television, have heard more music, some created especially for them. The traditional faith formulations compete with all kinds of other knowledge, some of which welcomes their hearts and aesthetic senses, and some of which simply wins out in capturing their hearts and minds.

For instance, in the world of academia, traditional forms of logic are now being seen as typical male forms, and close attention is being paid to "women's ways of knowing." But many of our daughters know that there is no full adult place for them in the church because of the church's refusal to let go of its doctrinal machismo.

They also experience sexist oppression elsewhere, in the world of work, in marriage, in friendships, and they are willing to steadily chip away at it. But they have only so much energy, and the church seems the most hopeless place of all to make changes.

Personal contributions

My last point is this. In all the years of my life within churches, I have never really been asked to contribute with *who I am:* thoughts, feelings, insights, handicaps, knowledge, blind spots, energy. The words always invited me, but the words were always framed in an agenda already set and made clear.

For instance, worship has mostly been the acting out of scripts designed by others, in the worst cases, set for life, or at least until the local council could be persuaded to make some minute changes. It's been: "You can only worship with what we give you."

Why could I have not been asked to worship with who I am? It's ironic, but the church invites me to bring in my sins for them to be forgiven. But, by and large, it does not ask me to bring in my gifts to be used, for that will upset too many people.

I understand the 20 years of "charismatic" swayings in our midst, some of which have cost established congregations many members. Their specifics are not my preference, but their desire I share: "Congregations, give us a direct shaping voice in the central acts of church liturgy. Let us worship God with *our* hearts, *our* minds, *our* strengths, *our* feelings." I, too, often feel powerless to be myself in church and to get liturgical deadwood pruned even a little bit. I have so seldom experienced leaders willing to let go of power, leaders who were intent on equipping me and the other saints for the work of the church.

Pain and comfort

Children everywhere are turning away, younger and younger, from institutions that keep them powerless. Easy money, welfare programs, widely available transportation, and ultimately the despair they feel, are driving them out of homes, schools, places of work and even early marriage at younger and younger ages. Why should the church be an exception?

These observations came from the tape, some because they were spoken in pointed phrases, others hinted at, and some I simply heard between the lines. No, I'm not forgetting the roles individual families might have played, nor the roles individual church-leaver decisions have. It's all part of the package.

I began writing this series with sorrow. The sorrow is still there. No writing will diminish it, nor will this tape or many more. Ultimately, none of the areas I have touched upon, singly or in combination, explain to me sufficiently why some of my own children no longer seek the communion of saints. In these matters, too, we see but through a glass darkly. But I have experienced grace in the writing. And beyond that I must pray without ceasing. Perhaps my prayers must include, "Come, Lord Jesus, come, before my own faith or that of any of my children cannot be found any more."

Adrian Peetoom is an educational consultant and writer who lives in Chatham, Ont.

1,000 pies, 2,000 meatballs

Photo: courtesy Irene Bakker

Parents cut up a roasted pig in the Emmanuel Christian Academy tent.

Irene Bakker

ESSEX, Ont. — Suppose you were the official caterer for the International Plowing Match, which drew over 130,000 people this year? That's the job the 124-student Emmanuel Christian Academy in Cottam, Ont., set for itself this year. Its successful bid to be the caterer was initiated in faith by Verna McLean, member of the school's fundraising and development committee.

Their food tent for the five-day match seated 430. It also held three freezers, three refrigerators, five stoves, two pop coolers, two microwaves and much more. In addition to serving the usual fast foods, the students needed to provide all the hot meals for the officials of the match and cater the official on-site banquets. Much of the food preparation took place off-site, including baking 1,000 pies, cooking 2,000 meatballs and providing two roast pigs.

An average of 40 volunteers were needed each day. The Department of Health required training for everyone involved in food preparation. Cashiers had to attend practice sessions. Other jobs included construction builders, electricians, potato peelers, night security, waiters, cooks, pie-bakers, food transporters, babysitters. Homes of school families were converted into bed-and-breakfast accommodations, and the school's student bell choir performed in the "Family Focus" tent.

Besides earning about $22,000 for the school, the families of the school — who come from 20 different churches — experienced a new unity and fellowship in the hard work and great fun of their achievement. A celebration held a week after the match ended was a time of thanksgiving for God's blessing and the visible witness given to the strength of Christian education.

See church news on page 19

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TV/Journalism

'World Tomorrow' moves up in television race

Photo: Rick MacWilliam
David Hulme of "The World Tomorrow."

Paul De Groot

EDMONTON — While many televangelists were hiring defense lawyers or begging for cash in the wake of scandals which saw many people turning them off, one program saw its audience grow.

"The World Tomorrow," fourth among American religious programs before the scandals, has moved to number two, according to the Arbitron ratings service.

One reason for the switch, says David Hulme, one of the program's four co-hosts, is the program's focus on issues. Instead of a stage-pacing, sweating, emoting preachers, viewers of "The World Tomorrow" get a calm, professional look at issues like global warming, runaway children or AIDS.

They also get the point of view of one of America's unusual churches.

With fewer than 100,000 members in North America, the Worldwide Church of God doesn't even make the top 50 American denominations in size. But its television program is seen on about 400 stations, and its *Plain Truth* magazine is seen in corner stores, banks and restaurants everywhere.

Since the magazine and television program are free, who pays?

Members of the Worldwide Church of God, for the most part. Eighty per cent of the budget for the program and magazine, both impressively professional, comes from the tithes of church members.

Controversial church

Founded by Herbert W. Armstrong in 1933, the Worldwide Church of God broke away from the Church of God over British-Israelitism and the observance of Old Testament feast days.

Armstrong was a strong believer in both. British-Israelites believe the 10 tribes of Israel, after their removal from Palestine by Babylonians, did not return to Palestine. Instead, they migrated north and eventually west, settling in Britain.

The belief is often criticized for its racist overtones. It hints that the English are the "true" Chosen People, and that Jews who now claim Palestine as their ancestral homeland are impostors.

The church also observes Saturday as its day of worship, and observes Jewish feasts such as Passover, Atonement, and Tabernacles. It holds that Christmas and Easter, not to mention Halloween and Valentine's Day, are pagan in origin.

The church's future has dimmed several times. Armstrong's son, Garner Ted Armstrong, became a household face in the 1960s when the church added a television program to its already-popular radio broadcasts. But in the mid-1970s, Garner Ted was involved in a financial and marital scandal. The church recovered from that, but in 1986, Herbert W. Armstrong died.

Joseph Tkach, Armstrong's long-time assistant, became leader of the church but has taken a much lower profile than its founder. Instead, people like the English-born Hulme, have become the public face of the church. If television ratings mean anything, they have brought the church renewed credibility.

Proselytizing not for them

They have not done much for its membership, however. Some of the standard statistical measures of church health, such as church membership, don't apply to the Worldwide Church of God, Hulme said in an interview in Edmonton. It doesn't believe in converting people.

"You can't force someone to think the way you believe. We only seek the opportunity to lay out information. What people do with it is up to them."

Hulme says the church must learn to communicate effectively in an age of declining religious commitment. While a high proportion of North Americans still profess some religious faith, only 10 to 15 per cent are strongly committed.

Is television, a medium blamed for breeding passivity, the best way to get people to make commitments?

Hulme calls it "a lifeline, a point of contact. They can then get a free magazine dealing with the issues they are talking about."

Besides, he points out, Jesus preached to thousands of people in his time but only netted about 120 disciples in his lifetime.

Second chance

In addition, the church believes everyone will get a second chance. The soul of a dead person returns to God, and on the day of resurrection, it will get another body. Some will receive "spirit form," bodies like that of the resurrected Jesus. Others will have a second physical existence, in which they can choose again to follow God's way.

As the title of the program suggests, "The World Tomorrow" emphasizes the prophecies in the Bible, and their fulfilment in today's events. British-Israelitism is not an important doctrine of the church, but simply a description of how some biblical prophecies have been fulfilled, Hulme says.

He stays clear of specific end-days predictions.

"The Bible teaches that Christ will return, but it emphasizes that nobody knows the day and hour."

In the meantime, the church and its broadcast ministries will continue to inject religious values into secular concerns, says Hulme.

"People are looking for certainties in life, a lack of ambiguity, for broad moral and ethical principles."

"An issue like global warming is religious in its broadest implications, because of the moral and religious problems of our day."

Vision TV on upward trend

Paul De Groot

EDMONTON — Vision Television, Canada's satellite-based religious television network, has significantly increased its broadcast schedule.

Now in its second year of operation, the network has boosted the number of hours purchased by participating churches and religious organizations, increased network programming by 25 per cent and doubled its broadcast time.

Among the new shows on the screen this fall are the first Vision program produced by Canadian Roman Catholics and a new program hosted by Brian Stiller of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada.

Vision also expects more participation from Canadian churches. It has allocated an additional three hours each Saturday and Sunday for programs produced and paid for by religious groups.

The new Catholic program, called "Catholic Forum," debuted Oct. 6. Although they endorsed the network in 1984, Canadian Catholic bishops said at the time that they had neither the funds nor the staff to participate formally in the then-struggling Canadian Interfaith Network.

The new program, says Vision media officer Richelle Wiseman, is sponsored by a number of Canadian Catholic organizations, rather than by the bishops themselves.

Variety, depth of issues

"The Stiller Report," which also began last month, brings Canadian evangelical Christians into the Vision schedule. As director of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, Brian Stiller has given Canadian evangelicals a more thoughtful, articulate image. His program will feature a panel of experts discussing ethical, social and moral issues such as AIDS, abortion, government legislation, legal issues and lifestyle trends.

The network will continue to broadcast many of its more popular programs from last year, sometimes under new names. "The Big Beat," a one-hour program of music videos, and introduced last spring, has become the half-hour "Heartlines," broadcast Wednesday evenings.

Toronto broadcaster and author Tom Harpur's interviews with major religious leaders is back for another season, as is a program on North-South development issues, hosted by Peter Trueman.

Vision has made heavy use of National Film Board (NFB) programs in the past, often presenting programs which had never before been broadcast on a national network. That continues this season with "The Cutting Edge," a special two-hour time slot on Tuesdays for NFB productions.

The network has elected to take advantage of relatively cheap satellite time to double the number of hours it broadcasts each day.

"It costs about the same to rent a satellite transponder for 24 hours each day as it does for six," says spokesperson Richelle Wiseman.

Although the new schedule calls for only four hours of programming each day, each program will be broadcast a total of three times, which makes the broadcast day 12 hours long.

Last season, the network broadcast three hours of programs each weekday, beginning at 4 p.m. Alberta time. The schedule was rebroadcast at 7 p.m. each day, for a total of six hours of broadcast time.

The 1989-90 program schedule calls for four hours of programming each day, beginning at 5 p.m. The programs are repeated at 9 p.m. the same day, and at 1 p.m. the following day, except on Friday. That day's programs are re-broadcast the following Monday, beginning at 1 p.m.

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TV/Journalism

REFORMA-TV co-produces a Christmas classic

Photo: courtesy The Back to God Hour/Faith 20

Riquetti (Scrooge) comes bearing gifts to the Campos (Cratchett) home near the end of a new Spanish language television adaptation of Charles Dickens' classic tale, "A Christmas Carol." This two-hour, made-for-TV movie, called "Cancion de Navidad," was co-produced by REFORMA-TV and Voice of the Andes Teleproductions. The program will be offered to stations throughout Latin America and in Spanish-speaking markets in the United States for telecast during this Christmas season.

PALOS HEIGHTS, Ill. (BGH) — Charles Dickens' classic story, "A Christmas Carol," has long captivated readers with its poignant message and colourful characters. The unscrupulous Ebenezer Scrooge, hapless Bob Cratchett, and frail Tiny Tim have become synonymous with the Christmas season.

Now REFORMA-TV, the television arm of The Back to God Hour's Spanish language department and Voice of the Andes Teleproductions in Quito, Ecuador, have adapted this timeless tale, called "Cancion de Navidad," into a two-hour, made-for-TV movie designed for Spanish-speaking viewers across the Americas. The Back to God Hour/Faith 20 is the radio and television voice of the Christian Reformed Church.

According to Rev. Juan Boonstra, Spanish language broadcast minister of The Back to God Hour, the movie, which was videotaped in Quito, was screened for the press in Quito on September 26. Additional press screenings are occurring in other cities as well.

"'Cancion de Navidad' will be ready for distribution this Christmas season," notes Boonstra, "and will be offered to dozens of television stations through Latin America and in Spanish-speaking markets in the United States."

First Spanish-language production

Says Ken Haron of Voice of the Andes Teleproductions, the television arm of HCJB, one of the world's largest missionary broadcasters, "We believe that this is the first time the story has been done as a screenplay in Spanish. Unlike the original story, it's set in modern-day Latin America. However, in some ways it's closer to the story that Dickens wrote than some of the English language screenplays."

HCJB missionary John Gowan points to the fact that this Spanish-language version "enhances the Christian aspect of the story, emphasizing the gospel message which is so clearly and wonderfully woven into the original story."

In the Spanish adaptation, the Scrooge character, named Riquetti, is visited by the ghost of Mr. Montgomery (Jacob Marley) and the ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Future. Near the end of the program, surrounded by Tiny Tim and the rest of the Campos (Cratchett) family, Riquetti comes to realize that the sins he's committed are not forgiven by his four visitors, but by God.

"We believe that "Cancion de Navidad" will be an excellent evangelistic tool with high artistic merit," Gowan adds.

This production, which features a cast of more than 90 professional and semi-professional actors from Ecuador, Colombia, Chile and Argentina, is the first of at least three specials to be co-produced by REFORMA-TV and HCJB. The agreement, reached last April, is the result of a long-time relationship between the Christian Reformed Church and HCJB.

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Encounter '89: journalism, religion and development

Nandy Heule

LONDON, Ont. — The most significant accomplishment of Vision TV has been to survive and stick to its mandate in its first year on the air, says one of the religious network's anchors recently.

Rita Sheldon Deverell, the leading on-air personality of the multi-faith network since it hit the air last September, says viewers watch programs on Vision TV which they can't see anywhere else.

Vision TV is the first network in the world to offer around the clock religious broadcasting by different faiths. The channel can be received free of charge by five million Canadians.

The Christian Reformed Church participates in Vision TV, airing Faith 20 programs produced by the Chicago-based Back to God Hour.

"Vision has fairly frequently taken off the shelves shows [about ethnic, religious and social controversies] which were judged to be too hot to handle," says Deverell.

Deverell participated in a discussion on the role of the religious media in Western society during a conference Sept. 29 - Oct. 1 at University of Western Ontario (UWO). (The Encounter '89 convention, sponsored by UWO and the Canadian International Development Agency, brought together about 100 journalists and educators from around the world to boost mutual understanding about the influences of the media and religious convictions on development.)

Deverell, a Baptist Christian and a self-described refugee from the 1960s, says that if Vision TV does its job, it will challenge viewers' cherished convictions about what's right and wrong and who can decide what's right and wrong. She says, "At our best, we are revolutionizing knowing."

TV anchors are symbolic of what a network stands for and her presence as an American-born, black female anchor tells viewers the religious network is willing to spearhead change, she says.

Before coming to Vision TV, Deverell worked as the acting director of the University of Regina's School of Journalism. She holds a doctorate in educational theory from the University of Toronto and an MA in the history of religions. The future of Vision TV will be difficult, she says. The network is being run on a "tightrope" programming budget of $800,000 a year.

Christian Reformed involvement

The Christian Reformed Church is contributing funds to the network to air Faith 20 programs. At the November Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada meeting (CCRCC), delegates will discuss the CRC's future involvement with Vision TV.

A six-member CCRCC committee, chaired by political scientist Justin Cooper, will recommend that the CRC expand its programming on Vision TV after 1991. If the programming plans are approved by CCRCC, the Christian Reformed Church's affiliated groups would start producing shows on current issues, public affairs, documentaries on church agencies and other Christian organizations, and possibly Christian post-secondary "distance learning" courses. The Christian colleges, Christian Labour Association, and Citizens for Public Justice would all be asked to become involved.

The proposed program package — now referred to as Reformed TV — should air in conjunction with the Faith 20 evangelism programs, the council committee recommends.

In the meantime, CCRCC will be asked to approve a quota payment of about $12 per family to cover half the expenses of the CRC's involvement in Vision TV next year. The Back to God Hour pays the other 50 per cent.

Correction:

We said last week that the publisher of Harry VanDyke's *Groen van Prinsterer's lectures on Unbelief and Revolution,* Wedge, is located in Toronto. We should have said: Jordan Station, Box 1000, L0R 1S0.

Atheist's book dedicated to Institute professor

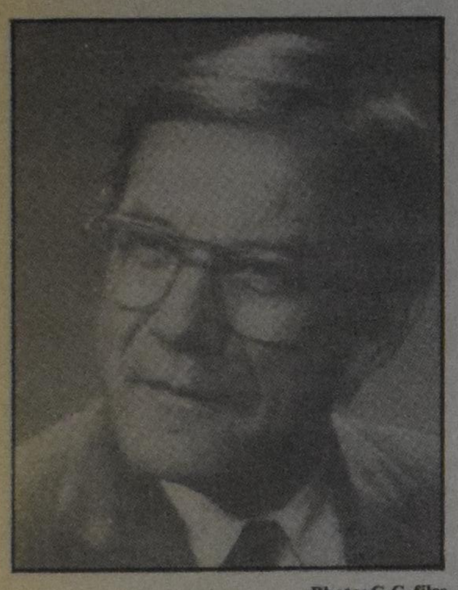

Photo: C.C. files

Prof. Kai Nielsen: debating with Hendrik Hart about religion in philosophy.

Robert VanderVennen

TORONTO — Hendrik Hart was "bowled over" when he opened his copy of Kai Nielsen's new book *God, Scepticism and Modernity* and found that Nielson had dedicated it "To Hendrik Hart and Bela Szabados, who disagree with much of it." Hart is senior member in systematic philosophy at the Institute for Christian Studies, Toronto.

Hart and Szabados had participated in a symposium at the 1986 meeting of the Canadian Philosophical Association in which philosophers evaluated a new book that Nielsen had published earlier that year. Hart had criticized Nielsen's statement that "belief in God in our time is irrational for someone who has both a good philosophical and a good scientific education." Nielsen is chairperson of the department of philosophy at the University of Calgary.

Hart and Nielsen's 1986 interchange was followed up at 1987 and 1989 annual meetings of Canadian philosophers. Hart says, "Most of our discussions centre in my affirmation that Nielsen is a deeply religious person, and his strong denial of that. We have a very good personal relationship, but our critiques of each other do not avoid the hard issues and they are very hard-hitting. Nielsen recognizes that I bring into my philosophical work my Christian faith. We are both concerned religiously, but he doesn't recognize that in himself." Hart has tried to persuade Nielsen that he has a hidden deity of his own.

Nielsen is a prolific writer who argues for a Marxist and atheistic position. Yet he has "a deep salvific concern for humanity. He has a deep human concern, and is a very humane person," says Hart. Nielsen is a lapsed Catholic, Hart adds, so he knows firsthand the Christianity which he rejects. Szabado, on the other hand, is a former atheist who is now a Catholic Christian.

This new book includes Nielsen's response to the criticisms of Hart and Szabado. Though surprised by the dedication, Hart says that "I knew he respected my views. In this dedication I feel a level of partnership in our differences that surprises me, given that his criticism of me is very hard-hitting."

Hart wrote a letter of appreciation to Nielsen about the dedication, and Nielsen wrote back that he was very moved by Hart's letter.

The two of them are now writing a book together in which they each argue their case about religious faith in relation to philosophy, based on their public dialogues at the philosophical meetings. The book is intended for publication next year in the Institute's academic series with University Press of America which has the general title "Christian Studies Today."

Mennonite Central Committee undergoes self-evaluation

Is the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) trying to do too much? For some MCC staff and board members attending a consultation last month to mark the 25th anniversary of MCC Canada, the answer was yes.

Since its creation almost 70 years ago as a relief agency, MCC has grown into a multi-million dollar relief, development and social service organization with 12 offices — MCC Bi-national, MCC Canada, MCC U.S., five Canadian provinces and four U.S. regions. As each office reported it became apparent that MCC's ministry has grown dramatically beyond overseas relief and development activity to include dozens of programs in North America.

"MCC tends to be involved in too many things," said Rich Sider, overseas department secretary for Latin America. "Other organizations focus on just one thing. Do we do a lot of things well, or just dabble?"

For longtime MCC board member Siegfried Bartel, MCC "is in too many countries. We're so proud to be in 54 countries. We don't have enough courage to discuss closing programs."

But MCC executive secretary John Lapp disagreed. "People are the salt, not programs," he said. "We can be widespread through our volunteers."

He went on to say that "the church is a community of gifts. MCC is one of those gifts. It was created by the church, and the church has assigned us tasks. MCC does the things that conferences and congregations cannot do effectively by themselves."

Dr. Reginald Bibby, University of Lethbridge sociologist and author of *Fragmented Gods,* a look at religion in Canada, was the featured speaker at the meeting. He told the Mennonites that, in a world where the number of social problems is infinite, you "tend to see every existing problem as falling within your domain."

"We are not the church"

Some at the gathering weren't sure that was such a bad thing. Said one staff member: "Isn't every need that comes within range of the church our area of involvement?" There seems to be consensus that since MCC is an agency which receives directives from the church, the wide range of programming simply represents the concern of Mennonites and Brethren in Christ for needy people at home and around the world.

At the same time, a few expressed concern that church members might come to see MCC as their "professional care agency." Bibby wondered to what extent church members might "delegate service to specialists" such as MCC, "a professional wing doing service so that members don't have to do it."

John Lapp shared Bibby's concern. "We are not the entire church," he said of MCC, "only a part. We need the larger church to know who we are, and what we should do."

Added MCC Canada board member Esther Epp-Thiessen: "Christ calls every Christian to be a caregiver." Sometimes when churches see a need, she said, they ask "'What is MCC doing about this problem'"

Instead, she stated, they should ask: "What is our church doing about the need or problem?"

Reflecting on the meeting, Peter Peters, executive director of MCC's Manitoba office, observed that MCC "is a gift of God to the church." Even after two days of discussion about the positive and negative aspects of MCC's service around the world, all could agree with that statement.

Peter and Marja are IN

Dear P and M:

I fear that I may have committed the unpardonable sin, yet I'm not sure what the unpardonable sin is. I am a Christian, having accepted Christ as Lord, and have continued to ask God for forgiveness.

Dear Worried:

Jesus mentions the unpardonable sin in Matthew 12:32: "Anyone who speaks a word against the son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or the age to come" (cf. Mark 3 and Luke 12).

If you're worried that you've committed this sin against the Holy Spirit, you haven't.

Consider the Spirit's work. He convicts people of sin and draws them to Christ. Your letter gives evidence that he has accomplished both of these things in your life.

The unforgivable sin is persistent, willful and knowing opposition to life in Christ which leaves you dead in sin. The biblical context shows that Jesus spoke these hard words in response to the Pharisees' accusation that he did his miracles by the power of Beelzebub, the prince of demons. Obviously Jesus was face to face with Satan's willful opposition which, if successful, would have left his listeners without a Saviour.

There is no particular "sin" (such as adultery, murder, incest, or treason) which we can identify as the one for which there is no forgiveness. In fact, no confessed sin will go unforgiven. Remember that even the crucifixion of Christ (Luke 23:34) and Paul's persecution of Christians (I Timothy 1:13) were forgivable sins.

You may be interested to hear what Christian scholars and writers have said.

St. Augustine: The unpardonable sin is "persistent stubbornness even to death."

John Calvin: "They sin against the Holy Spirit who, with evil intention, resist God's truth although by its brightness they are so touched that they cannot claim ignorance."

Bishop Fulton J. Sheen: "The really unforgivable sin is the denial of sin, because by its very nature, there is now nothing to be forgiven."

Lloyd J. Ogilvie: "The one sin God cannot forgive is whatever sin we refuse to confess."

We encourage you to discuss your "pardonable sin" with a close friend or your pastor. Let the certainty of Christ's forgiveness fill you with his peace.

Peter and Marja Slofstra are a pastor and wife team living in St. Catharines, Ont. They are assisted by an advisory panel consisting of: Sam Da Silva, Ineke Brouwer-Parlevliet, Tom Zeyl, Willy Suk-Kleer, Bert Witvoet.

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Thanks

GEUZEBROEK:
We would like to thank all those who made our 45th wedding anniversary an unforgettable one. The tokens of love and appreciation of so many, besides our children and grandchildren, really warmed our hearts. We thank our Lord for giving us to one another for so many years and for giving us an enriching place in the service of his word and sacraments.
Jack and Rie Geuzebroek

Accommodations

Student or full-time working girl wanted to share accommodation in a house on Limeridge Rd. W., near West 5th St., in Hamilton. Please contact Sandra at (416) 527-1541, days or (416) 388-3140, evenings.

For Rent

One-bedroom mobile home in adult park in Winterhaven, Florida, across the lake from Cypress Gardens. Available Nov. 1 - Dec. 22, 1989, Jan 2 - 31, and Mar. 15 - Apr. 15, 1990. Rates $500 per month or $150 per week. Pre-Christmas rate $400 per month. Phone (705) 526-3395.

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Experienced horticulturalist desires position in a nursery. Preferably in sales. Good plant knowledge. Familiar with landscape design and plant diseases. Computer experience. Please call Marcella Eikelboom at (519) 763-7896.

Births

DEGELDER:
With joy and thanks to the Lord, Rita and Peter DeGelder of Mt. Brydges announce the birth of their grandchildren

ALEXANDER JAMES

born Oct. 5, 1988, son of Jack and Betsy DeGelder, Grand Rapids, Mich. Alex just celebrated his first birthday; and

KATHERINE GRACE

born on Oct. 15, 1989, daughter of Peter and Susan DeGelder, Grand Rapids, Mich. New cousins for Kelly, Charlotte and Stephanie DeGelder of London, Ont. Great-grandchildren of Mrs. Wilma VanderStelt of Brantford. Katherine Grace is Mrs. VanderStelt's 11th great-grandchild and was born on her 82nd birthday.

Birthday

HESS:
With praise and thanksgiving to God, we are happy that we may share God's kindness in the life of our wife, mother and oma

LUCIA HESS

who will be 80 on Nov. 4, 1989.
Happy birthday Mom and Oma
Fred
John & Tina
Lucy, Elaine, Pete & Margaret, Rich.
Hank & Kathy
Doug, Brian, Jeff.
A tea party will be held Nov. 4, 1989, from 2-5 p.m. in the Common Room of Viewmount Christian Homes, 220 Viewmount Dr., Nepean (Ottawa), Ont.
Home address: 220 Viewmount Dr., Apt. 213, Nepean, ON K2E 7M5.

Congratulations to Lucia Hess on her 80th birthday.

Obituaries

Kollumerland, Fr. the Neth. — Orillia, Ont. Canada
Nov. 3, 1914 — Oct. 3, 1989
Psalm 23 and Psalm 121
The Lord, in his divine compassion and mercy, called home our beloved mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother

AAFKE VAN DER BOON
(nee Steringa)

Predeceased for only 12 weeks by her husband of 51 years, Jan van der Boon.
Lovingly remembered by:
Hans & Alice Vander Boon — Smithers, B.C.
Detty & Jacob Medemblik — Fergus, Ont.
Biennie & Bill op den Kelder — Orillia, Ont.
Jackie & Bill Taylor — Orillia, Ont.
Henry & Kathie Vander Boon — Washago, Ont.
Bonni & John Yerex — Bowmanville, Ont.
along with 18 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.
The funeral service was held Oct. 6, 1989, at First Chr. Ref. Church, Orillia, with Rev. Peter Meyer officiating.
Correspondence address: Mrs. Jackie Taylor, 279 Laclie St., Orillia, ON L3V 4N8.

Anniversaries

Congratulations to Ge and Geert Lunshof (nee Westerhuis) on their 50th wedding anniversary.

Meppel — Hamilton
1939 — November 15 — 1989
With praise and gratitude to God we announce with joy the 50th wedding anniversary of our dear parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents

GE and GEERT LUNSHOF
(nee Westerhuis)

We thank God for his providence in their lives.
Margaret & Sam Buma
Albert & Jane Lunshof
Ruth & Martin Vuyk
Mary & Pete Vyn
Henry & Judy Lunshof
Ina & Siebert Van Houten
George & Ann Lunshof
25 grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.
Open house will be held, D.V., on Saturday, Nov. 18, 1989, from 2-5 p.m. in the Common Room at Wellingstone Christian Homes, 1415 Upper Wellington St., Hamilton, Ont.
Home address: 1415 Upper Wellingstone, Apt. 217, Hamilton, ON L9A 5E3.

1964 — Fruitland — 1989
August 15
"Accept one another, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God." (Rom. 15:7)

PETER and WILMA GROOT
(nee Van Oenen)

Thanks be to God for his constant care and guidance in your lives for the past 25 years. May God continue to bless and care for you in the years ahead. Thank you for loving us all these years.
Norm
Steve
Rick
Chris
Home address: Box 18, Group 16, Fruitland, ON L0R 1L0.

Obituaries

The members of the "Daughters of Priscilla" Ladies Society of the First Christian Reformed Church, Hamilton, Ont., were saddened with the recent passing away of their member

Mrs. LILLIAN REITSMA

We extend our sincere sympathy to her family and rejoice with them in the knowledge that she died in the Lord.
Psalm 27.

Anniversaries

Clinton — Strathroy
1949 — November 20 — 1989
With thanks and joy we wish to announce the 40th anniversary of our parents

JACOB and IDA WESTERHOF
(nee Luinstra)

God has been good and has blessed us with parents who depended on God and his word all of their lives.
We wish you both God's blessing in the years you have together.
With love:
Henry & Liz Westerhof
Fred & Shirley Westerhof
Greta & John VanderWekken
Ann & Tom Rickwood
Albert Westerhof
and seven grandchildren.
Home address: R.R.#4, Komoka, ON N0L 1R0.

Obituaries

"But the steadfast love of our Lord abides forever ..."
On Oct. 11, 1989, the Lord took unto himself

ABRAHAM BONTKES

at the age of 81.
He leaves in God's care his loving wife Jacoba and his children:
Ben & Ena Hesselink
Bill & Carolyn Bontkes
Hans & Greta Bontkes
Peter & Susan Bontkes
John & Cathy Visscher
Graham & Marian Zape
21 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.
Funeral service was held Oct. 14, 1989, in Third Chr. Ref. Church, Edmonton, Alta., Pastor Jack Westerhof officiating.

On Oct. 13, 1989, the Lord took to himself

JACOBUS FRANCISCUS (Ko) BREUKER

at the age of 76.
He will be lovingly remembered by his wife Mariette and their children:
Jack (predeceased) & Anne Breuker
Mary & Al Lobbes
Bob & Trinka Breuker
Ken & Sylvia Breuker
Ed & Janet Breuker
and 14 grandchildren, five great-grandchildren.
The funeral was held on Oct. 17, 1989, at First Chr. Ref. Church, Victoria, B.C.
Rev. Henry Jonker officiated.
Correspondence address: 279 West Burnside, Victoria, BC V9A 1C6.

Obituaries

On Sept. 13, 1989, the Lord took unto Himself and very suddenly for us, as the result of an automobile accident, our dear husband, father, son-in-law and brother-in-law

JAMES MICHAEL CHURCHILL

in his 34th year.
Dear husband of Helen Lootsma — Welland, Ont.
Beloved father of Tammy and Daniel.
Special son-in-law of Arend & Helen Lootsma of Fruitland, Ont.
Remembered by:
John & Anne Roukema
Peter & Sharon Lootsma
Dorothy Lootsma
Andy & Debbie Lootsma
Bill & Faye Lootsma
nieces and nephews.
"How Great Thou Art."

During a visit to Canada, the Lord called home his child

MAAIKE KRAMER
(nee Bruggenkamp)

in Burlington, Ont., on Oct. 23, 1989, in her 83rd year.
We thank the Lord for what He has given through her life to our family and beyond.
2 Timothy 4:7
Beloved wife of Metske Steffen Kramer of Leeuwarden, the Neth.
Loving mother of:
Nynke & Willem Louwsma — Bolsward, the Neth.
Geartje & Cor Osinga — Dokkum, the Neth.
Ant & Dooitse Bootsma — Groningen, the Neth.
Jacob & Anneke Kramer — Burlington, Ont.
Sipke & Addy Kramer — Berwick, Nova Scotia
Beppe of 16 grandchildren.
The funeral service was held in Berlikum, Friesland.
Correspondence address: M.S. Kramer, Prins Bernhard St. 3, Leeuwarden, the Netherlands.

"Do not let your heart be troubled. Trust in God, trust also in Me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with Me, that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going." (John 14:1-4).

ELSIE MATTHEWS
(nee Horlings)

died in her 89th year, on Oct. 6, 1989, at Faith Manor, Holland Christian Homes, Brampton, Ont.
Wife of the late Ralph Matthews
Dear mother of:
Hedy & Sidney VanDyke
Jean & Ken Cuthbert
Survived by brothers Walter and William and sisters Catherine Hagen and Brenda Nydam.
A very special grandmother to eight grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren.
Correspondence address: Hedy & Sid VanDyke, Box 591, Bradford, ON L3Z 2B1.

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Classified/Events

Anniversaries

Congratulations to Roelof and Johanna Smid on their 50th wedding anniversary.

Geleen Limberg
1939 November 16 1989

On Nov. 16, 1989, we celebrate with joy and thanksgiving to God, the 50th anniversary of our parents

ROELOF and JOHANNA SMID
(nee Bomhoff)

We thank the Lord for Christian parents and for the many blessings he has bestowed on them and us.
Congratulations and love from your children:

Henry & Frances Kunkel
Colleen & Rick, Randy, Erica
Adolph & Audrey Vaags
Lori, Anthony, Roger, Louise, Glenn
Harm & Jackie Smid
Bradley, Jeremy
John & Rita Kruizenga
Joanne, Curt
Paul & Margaret Bisson
Amber, Nicholas
Kerry & Lorie Rohloff
Cheri, Ryan

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Anniversaries

Teachers

SMITHERS, B.C.: Bulkley Valley Christian High School has an immediate opening for a **French** teacher. Phone Rien Moeliker, principal, (604) 847-4238 (school) or (604) 847-2805 (home).

TABER, Alta.: Taber Christian School, operated by the Society for Christian Education in Southern Alberta, will need a **Grade 1** teacher beginning in January 1990. Interested applicants should contact: Henry Ronda, Principal, Box 2256, Taber, AB T0K 2G0. Tel. (403) 223-4550.

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Teachers

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Special Concerns

- the unfilled vacancy of General Co-ordinator (due to financial reasons).
- our mortgage of $23,000 is up for renewal next spring, if paid off we will save on the $3,000 yearly interest.
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Vacations

Vacations

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Events

Events

CCRCC CONFERENCE

You are invited to join delegates to the meeting of the Council of Christian Reformed Churches in an open conference about: **The Christian Church and Aboriginal People in Canada.**
Keynote speaker: Rev. Stanley McKay Jr., Indian Christian Minister and Teacher

Workshops on traditional spirituality, treaties, racism, and the church in the light of the gospel with **Rev. Hendrik DeBruyn, Rev. Menno Wiebe, and Mr. John Olthuis.**
Monday, Nov. 13, 2 p.m. until Tuesday, Nov. 14, noon.
at: Willowdale Christian Reformed Church
70 Hilda Ave., Willowdale, ON
Registration $10.00

Classified/Events

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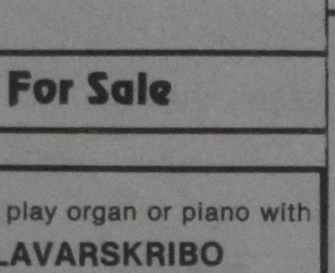

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For Sale

Events

Events

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English: "In Thy Light We See Light"
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Soccer: Holland vs. Finland

On the road to **World Cup Italy 1990,** Holland will play its final qualifying game against Finland on:

Wednesday, November 15, 1989

A big screen exclusive! For time confirmation phone **two** days prior to the event.

Place: Swan Club, 5415 Dundas St. West, beside Canadian Tire, in **Etobicoke** (take Hwy. 427 and exit on Dundas East).

Phone: (416) 233-4041

Room for 500 people **$20 at the door**

Events

Events

'THE CHORALIERS'

Christian Male Chorus
of
Brampton and District
presents
a

Fall Concert

with guest performers

Saturday, Nov. 18, 1989
8:00 p.m.

Second Brampton CRC (Steeles/McLaughlin)

Everyone welcome — No admission charge

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and Founding Director Harold De Haan
cordially invite you to celebrate with them

TWENTY YEARS
of making fine choral music
for God and their friends

In Concert, Friday, November 17, 8 p.m.
at Central Presbyterian Church, Hamilton
(Charlton and Caroline)
Reception immediately following concert

Tickets are now available for concert and reception at $12 from members by phoning (416) 389-2104 or at the door.

ATTENTION!

When you fax your display or classified ads to us (particularly obituaries), please type them and check spelling BEFORE you transmit the text. Thank you.

Miscellaneous

Don't forget ... It's time to extend Christmas greetings through C.C.

Just a reminder that the deadline for season's greetings to appear in the Dec. 1 Christmas issue is Wednesday, Nov. 22. Every year subscribers to Calvinist Contact use the special classified section to extend their season's greetings to family and friends. Kindly enclose payment of $20 with your ad and send it in today. Forget the fuss of Christmas cards and postage stamps; one ad does it all.

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L2W 1A1

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Proceeds go to Hope Community Church, a CRC Home Missions Church.

Events

The Can. Association for the Advancement of Netherlandic Studies

announces its Second Conference to be held in **Waterloo,** Ont., from Nov. 10-12, 1989. Highlights are a film about the resistance movement during the war, entitled: "The Girl with the Red Hair" shown in the East Campus Hall, room 1219, of the University of Waterloo on **Saturday, Nov. 11, at 7:30 p.m. On Sunday, Nov. 12, 3-4 p.m.** an organ concert will be given of Dutch composers during the 2nd World War and after by **Dr. Barrie Cabena** in the **Lutheran Seminary Chapel** of the **Wilfred Laurier University.** Admission to both events is free. Everyone is welcome! For info. contact Corry Derksen at (519) 893-5767.

NOTICE
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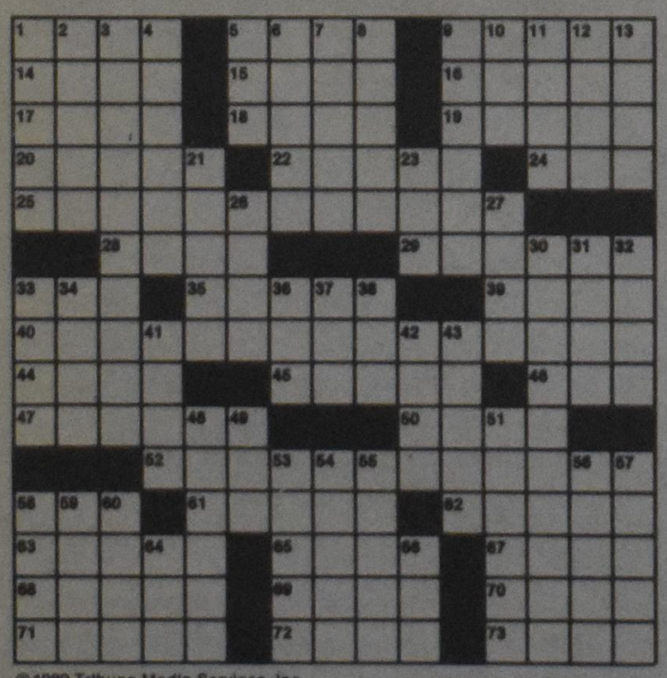
Order your Christmas gift subscription now!

Calendar of Events

Nov. 4	Fifth annual auction at the Christian School, **Sarnia,** Ont. Watch for local announcements.
Nov. 4	ICS Public Convocation for the graduation of Junior Members and Dr. Clifford C. Pitt's farewell address at 2 p.m., Knox College Chapel, 59 St. George St., **Toronto,** Ont. Reception to follow.
Nov. 4	Andre Knevel in concert at 8 p.m., Central Ave. CRC, **Holland,** Mich.
Nov. 7	The film "A man called Norman" will be shown at 7 p.m., Grace CRC, **Chatham,** Ont.
Nov. 9	CFFO Provincial Board meeting from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. in the CRC, **Georgetown,** Ont. For info. call (519) 837-1620 (a.m.) or (519) 338-3214 (p.m.).
Nov. 9-11	Christian Writers' Conference at Ontario Bible College, **Toronto,** Ont. Keynote speaker: Philip Yancey. For info. call (416) 479-5885.
Nov. 10	"Italian Baroque and Beyond," first of the Stained Glass Concert Series 89/90. With Boris Brott and the Amadeus Orchestra and the Redeemer College Choir. At 8 p.m., Redeemer College, **Ancaster,** Ont. Pre-concert lecture at 7 p.m. For tickets call (416) 648-2131.
Nov. 10-12	Second conference of the Can. Assoc. for the Advancement of Netherlandic Studies in **Waterloo,** Ont. Highlights: film about resistance movement and organ concert by Dr. Barrie Cabena. For info. call Corry Derksen at (519) 893-5767.
Nov. 11	Concert of chamber music by pianist Mary VanderVennen, violinist Mara Westerblom and cellist Patricia Hiemstra, together with a dance performance by Gioia Seerveld. At 8 p.m., Grace CRC, **Scarborough,** Ont. Admission $10.
Nov. 11	The choirs and brass of the Ontario Christian Music Assembly, directed by Leendert Kooij, present a "Christian Festival Concert," at 8 p.m. in **Toronto's** famous Roy Thomson Hall. The concert will also feature organists Andre Knevel and Klaas Jan Mulder, as well as soprano Etty van der Mei. For info. and tickets call (416) 636-9779.
Nov. 17	Ambassadors' 20th anniversary concert at 8 p.m., Central Presbyterian Church, 165 Charlton St. W., **Hamilton,** Ont. For tickets call (416) 389-2104 or contact members.
Nov. 17-19	Tenth Annual Fall Conference of Christian Reformed Singles. At Five Oakes Centre, **Paris,** Ont. Keynote speaker: Pastor Peter Slofstra from St. Catharines. Registration deadline is Sept. 5 ($5.00 late filing fee). For info. call (519) 453-5444 or 455-7109.
Nov. 17	Classis Hamilton Chapter of C.C.M. meets at 8 p.m., Mount Hamilton CRC, **Hamilton,** Ont. Speaker: Dr. N. De Jong of Trinity College on: "Are the creeds still relevant for today?"
Nov. 17 Dec. 15	"Deconstruction - Reconstruction," an exhibit of works by well-known Canadian artist Gerard Pas. At Redeemer College, **Ancaster,** Ont. For info. call (416) 648-2131.
Nov. 18	50th anniversary celebration of the Back to God Hour with Dr. Joel Nederhood. Mass choir and special music. At 7:30 p.m., Maranatha CRC, **Woodstock,** Ont.
Nov. 18	Bazaar at Calvin Memorial Chr. School, **St. Catharines,** Ont. Doors open at 10 a.m. Something for everyone!
Nov. 18	Ambassador's 20th anniversary concert in Maranatha CRC, **Cambridge,** Ont. at 8 p.m.
Nov. 25	Shalom Manor's Tea and Craft Sale, from 2-4 p.m. at Shalom Manor, **Grimsby,** Ont.
Dec. 1	"Sing Noel," a Stained Glass Concert with Boris Brott and the Amadeus Orchestra, featuring Stuart Laughton, trumpeter, and the Redeemer College Choir. At 8 p.m., Redeemer College, **Ancaster,** Ont. Pre-concert lecture at 7 p.m. For tickets call (416) 648-2131.
Dec. 2	Organ recital by John Wm. Vandertuin at St. James Anglican Church, **Brantford,** Ont.
Dec. 2	50th anniversary Jubilee service of the Back to God Hour at 7:30 p.m. in the CRC, **New Westminster,** B.C. Speaker: Dr. Joel Nederhood.
Dec. 2	"Adopt-A-Con" organizational and instructional meeting from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. at John Knox Christian School, 82 McLaughlin Rd. S., **Brampton,** Ont. Bring your own lunch.
Dec 3 & 10	"Nederlandse Kerstzangdienst" at 7:30 p.m., Emmanuel Reformed Church, 170 Clarke St., **Woodstock,** Ont.
Dec. 9	Christmas concert by three London choirs plus Andre Knevel at the organ. At 7:30 p.m., Dundas St. Centre United Church, London, Ont.

Weekly puzzle

by Stanley B. Whitten



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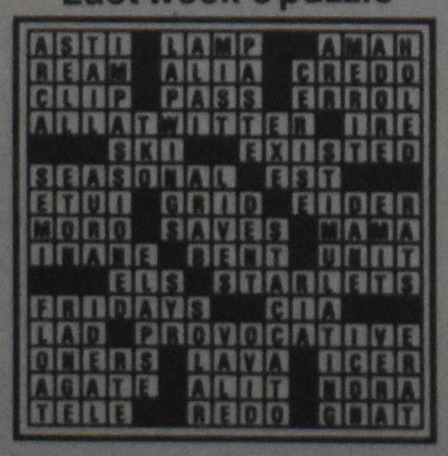
ACROSS
1 Cartoon Elmer
5 Ah, me!
9 Hollandaise e.g.
14 "—'s Irish Rose"
15 Enclosure
16 Laud
17 Defeat
18 Wife of Geraint
19 Great amount
20 Northern Europeans
22 Aspect
24 Garden tool
25 Informers
28 Certain aircraft
29 Waver
33 WW II agcy.
35 Video's complement
39 Comical Jay
40 Mischievous elf
44 Filly's brother
45 Eng. royal house
46 Curve
47 One of the Furies
50 Grate
52 Iowa
58 Broadway hit letters
61 Strained
62 Dine at home
63 Boundary
65 Lat. abbr.
67 Ind. mountain pass
68 Lavin sitcom
69 — majesty
70 Emerald Isle
71 Taxi adjunct
72 Permits
73 Cicatrix

DOWN
1 Tumbles
2 Wolf pack member
3 Like some bottles
4 Autocrat
5 Expert
6 Veranda
7 Growing older
8 Ground cover
9 Calm
10 Lumberjack's tool
11 Beehive State
12 Perry of song
13 Otherwise
21 US painter
23 Fortune
26 Cork
27 Betray
30 Extrasensory
31 Genesis name
32 Noisy quarrels
33 Killer whale
34 Puddle
36 Speck
37 Marker
38 Strange
41 Yearning
42 Golf warning
43 Rub out
48 Rag
49 Be in debt
51 Phases
53 Toll
54 Cosmetician Lauder
55 Leavening
56 Coronet
57 Door sign
58 Hit hard
59 Irritate
60 Leave out
64 Diamonds
66 Musical Brown

Last week's puzzle



Redeemer College and Festival Music present

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FOUR superb concerts
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Italian Baroque & Beyond
November 10, 1989

Sing Noel
December 1, 1989

German Baroque & Beyond
February 9, 1990

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April 13, 1990

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Books

Robert VanderVennen, book review editor

Christian alternative to secular politics

Servant or Tyrant? The Task and Limits of Government, by Dirk de Vos, Edward E. Ericson, Jr., et al. Mississauga: Christian Labour Association of Canada and Work Research Foundation, 1989. Paperback, 116 pp., $9.95 plus $1.50 for mail orders. Reviewed by David T. Koyzis, Assistant Professor of Political Science, Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ontario.

In the absence of a public philosophy prescribing normative limits to its competence, the state has become increasingly bloated in recent decades. As citizens we bear much of the responsibility for this, because we have come to expect our governments to perform a greater number of services on our behalf.

This continuing crisis of the state was the theme of a 1987 conference held at Redeemer College and sponsored by the Christian Labour Association and the Work Research Foundation. The proceedings of the conference are published in the volume under review, which includes contributions by Dirk de Vos, Edward E. Ericson, Jr., Paul Marshall, Albert M. Wolters, Ralph Harris, Thomas Langan, Michael Novak and Harry Underwood. The first four of the above listed contributors are familiar to Reformed Christian readers, while the rest are better known in Roman Catholic and so-called neoconservative circles. What ties the essays together is a shared conviction that the state is limited either by a divinely ordained normative order or by natural law.

Servant or Tyrant makes a promising beginning with the first two essays by Wolters and Marshall. Wolters briefly discusses the words "sword" and "shield" as they appear in the Bible, while Marshall argues that we cannot make our political theories Christian by filtering them through the science of ethics. Ethics is unable to grasp the central distinctions among such realms as politics, economics, and family life. Common and often repeated attempts to infuse our necessarily narrow conception of ethics into politics have resulted in a lopsided vision which, though claiming to be Christian, proves to be compatible with "almost every political ideology under the sun" (p. 11).

Some of the other essays, however, are less helpful in setting forth a positive Christian alternative to secular politics. In fact, Novak, Harris and Underwood express a decided preference for an earlier variety of liberalism which puts its faith in the free workings of the market to produce public good. For example, Novak's boundless enthusiasm for the market is quaintly reminiscent of a nineteenth-century version of liberal optimism strangely undisturbed by the economic and political crises of the 20th century. And Harris rightly decries the kind of politics bred by the welfare state in which "myopic sectional interest groups" (p. 59) vie for a bigger piece of the pie. But he seems not to understand that interest group politics is historical outgrowth of the very economic liberalism he champions.

Does a concern for limiting the state necessarily throw us into the arms of classical liberals with their vaunted "nightwatchman state"? Does a repudiation of Rousseau and Marx inevitably lead us to embrace Locke and Smith? Several of the contributors would have us believe this. But there is much reflection within both Reformed and Roman Catholic traditions to illustrate that alternatives do exist.

The essays in this book are thought-provoking and certainly worth reading. But the reader would be well-advised also to read Dooyeweerd's *Roots of Western Culture* or Goudzwaard's *Capitalism and Progress* to understand the secular roots of liberal ideology.

Dutch thesis analyses homosexuality

C.C. Staff

In a PhD dissertation in ethics, defended in the theological faculty at the Free University of Amsterdam on October 19, 1989, the author, Pim Pronk, deals with "types of moral argument re homosexuality." The title of the study, published by VU Uitgeverij, Amsterdam, is *Anti-natural? (Tegennatuurlijk?)*. The supervisor was the equally well-known biologist J. Lever, who was involved in part because the author started his academic career as a biologist. The outside reader, also quite well-known to readers of *Calvinist Contact*, was dogmatic theologian J. Veenhof.

Since homosexuality is much in discussion in churches and in North America generally these days, the author's main aim is particularly interesting. He analyses the argumentation of the mainline Protestant churches in Holland in their ethical evaluation of homosexuality. He focuses on the development in attitudes from "unnatural" at first, toward approval within the bonds of love and fidelity at present.

In the introduction Pronk presents his claim that the key to this development is the interpretation of the concept "nature." The first chapter investigates indiscriminate uses of "nature" in which the many different senses of it — biological, moral, religious — are not adequately distinguished. This plays a role in past as well as present discussions, in pro- as well as anti- positions. The second chapter pays special attention to the relationship between scientific data and normative moral evaluation. The author concludes that these data, no matter what their character is, can never simply serve as a sufficient basis for moral evaluation.

That leads to chapter three, which focuses on the moral nature of homosexuality. Pronk argues that in the discussion about homosexuality, heterosexuality functions as a standard and that "nature" enters this discussion as a confusing element, especially where the role of procreation is taken to be essential. Instead, he offers morally relevant criteria of happiness whereby homosexuals have the right and freedom to enjoy their relationship.

The author then concludes in chapter four with a consideration of religious objections. He argues that specific texts in the Bible that deal with homosexuality, unequivocally condemn homosexual behaviour. He then discusses the criteria we all use to decide that certain specific texts do or do not apply to present situations. He especially examines the relationships between theological positions and methods of Bible-interpretation on the one hand, and specific positions on homosexuality on the other hand.

His conclusion is that people's positions on homosexuality are formed independently of their theology and that only after that fact these positions are theologically defended. His analysis of the nature of theology confirms his view that this conclusion is only to be expected. He finally arrives at the position that religious objections are not well-founded and that attempts at finding theological solutions must fail.

Although the study is written in Dutch, an ample summary in English makes it possible for people not acquainted with Dutch to gain a fair impression of Pronk's main arguments.

Frier of G

Wayne Br

Driven or led?

"The Lord is my shepherd..." **(Psalm 23:1)**

Several years ago, Jack Glenn, pastor of a Presbyterian congregation in Mendota, Illinois, decided that the church's nativity scene needed a little repair work. The shepherd figures held staffs made of electrical conduit, bent and rebent and kinked over the years.

"Let's get real ones!" he thought. But no farm supply store had such a thing. Intrigued, Pastor Glenn asked around until he gained the name of a man who not only owned a large herd of sheep, but was also an expert on their care.

"Where can I get a genuine shepherd's staff?" he asked.

"Nowhere!" came the reply. "You have to remember that here in the West, sheep are driven by dogs. It's only in the East that they are led by a shepherd!"

Mob mania

Ours often seems to be a *driven* society. The ideas of the French Revolution have permeated our culture: *Life! Liberty! Land!* We North Americans have turned the last into a steady pleasure trip by translating it this way: *The pursuit of happiness!* And we're all too often a driven society, scrambling after more, better and bigger thrills.

But one picture from the French Revolution, with its mob mania, perhaps best typifies the whole enterprise of Western life. A wild-eyed man comes charging up to a citizen pausing on a Paris streetcorner.

"Where's the crowd?" he demands. "Tell me quick! Which way have they gone? I must follow them! I'm their leader!"

Driven by madness! Driven by the dogs! The dogs of desire, the dogs of fame and fortune, the dogs of war .... It's a dog-eat-dog world!

He leadeth me

Maybe it's time to return to the East. Not the East of mysticism and transcendental meditation, helpful as they might be, but rather the One who grew up in the East, the One called "The Good Shepherd" (John 10:1-18), "The Great Shepherd" (Hebrews 13:20-21), and "The Chief Shepherd" (1 Peter 5:4). Maybe it's time to stop being driven and be led again in the simplicity of devotion. Maybe it's time to stop with David on the hillsides of Judea, and sing the song of the shepherd!

And what a wonder of peace and tranquillity Psalm 23 is! Sometimes, in our mad dashing about, we see only the last verses, the verses about comfort at death and the promise of life beyond the grave. But which of us will hope in such things if the calm serenity of the early verses isn't also a mark of our lives? For some people, the closest they seem to get to Psalm 23 is having its poetic lines etched on the little memorial cards that are handed out at their funerals!

The Japanese Christian Toki Miyashina once surveyed the damage done by Western culture on his hustle-bustle society. He read Psalm 23 again, and paraphrased it in a way that speaks volumes:

The Lord is my pace-setter, I shall not rush:
He makes me stop and rest for quiet intervals;
He provides me with images of stillness which restore my serenity;
He leads me in the way of efficiency, through calmness of mind;
and His guidance is peace.
Even though I have a great many things to accomplish each day,
I will not fret, for His presence is here.
His timelessness, His all-importance keeps me in balance.
He prepares refreshment and renewal in the midst of activity
by anointing my mind with His oils of tranquillity;
my cup of joyous energy overflows.
Surely harmony and effectiveness shall be the fruits of my hours,
and I shall walk in the pace of my Lord,
and dwell in His house forever.

I think that if David were with us today, he'd like that.

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